

Hizbollah guerrilla killed in clash with Israelis

BEIRUT (AFP) — A guerrilla of the Hizbollah was killed on Friday in clashes with Israeli troops in southern Lebanon, the Shiite Islamist organisation said. Mahmoud Hussein Borji, known as "Bilal," was killed early Friday "while fulfilling his jihad [holy struggle] duty," according to a Hizbollah statement. The Hizbollah statement did not specify the place where the guerrilla was killed or whether the clash was inside Israel's self-declared "security zone." Hizbollah guerrillas had clashed with Israeli troops early Friday inside the occupied border zone, security sources said. Hizbollah is the main guerrilla group fighting to force Israel to relinquish the border zone it occupies. Since the beginning of the year, 41 Hizbollah guerrillas have been killed in southern Lebanon. Israel has lost 39 soldiers during the same period.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

Albright expected in Cairo next week

CAIRO (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will make a short visit to Cairo early next week at the end of her current tour of several African countries. Egyptian officials said on Friday, Ms. Albright will meet Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa "on recent American efforts to relaunch the Israeli-Arab peace process" during her visit expected Sunday or Monday. Egyptian foreign ministry officials said. There was no confirmation of the visit from the U.S. embassy in Cairo, which is closed Fridays and Saturdays. Ms. Albright is due Friday to leave the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) for South Africa. On Sunday she wraps up her tour of seven countries with a visit to Zimbabwe.

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King describes Iraq's execution of Jordanians as 'heinous crime' 'The blood of Jordanians is not cheap'

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday denounced the execution of four Jordanians in Iraq describing it as a "heinous crime," that comes at a time when Iran released two Jordanian prisoners of war who were captured while defending Iraq in 1981.

"Today we receive two Jordanians who were defending Iraq, and not the Iraqi regime, who fell in captivity and thank God were released by our brothers in Iran," the King said following the arrival on Thursday of the two Jordanians released by Iranian authorities.

"This is a bright picture compared with the ugly and unpleasant picture that we have seen through what four Jordanians were subjected to in Iraq," the King said.

"The blood of Jordanians is not cheap..." he said. "We will see what the next days will bring."

The King's words came hours before the bodies of

two Jordanians executed in Iraq for smuggling car spare parts out of Baghdad were buried in the Kingdom in an emotionally-charged ceremony on Friday.

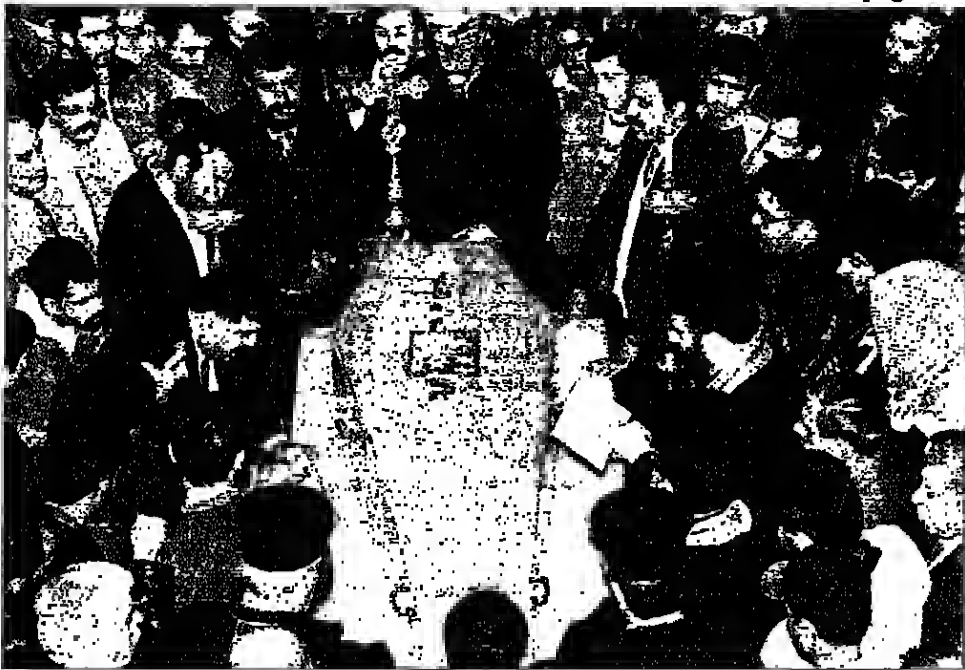
Hundreds of angry relatives screamed and cursed

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as the two coffins, carrying the corpses of Rizq Bsharah and Waleed Nseirat, were carried to separate cemeteries in their hometowns of Amman and Irbid.

The two bodies were

flown in aboard two military helicopters late on Thursday. The two other Jordanians, brothers Sa'ad and Salah Al Dawji, also executed for the same charges, were buried in

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Jordanian priests pray Friday, over the remains of Rizq Bsharah Rizq, 32, who was executed in Iraq last Monday. His Majesty King Hussein condemned the executions as a heinous crime (photo by Yusef 'Allan)

King praises performance of delegation to OIC, says summit results satisfactory Summit unanimously recognised Jordan's role in preserving identity of Jerusalem — Crown Prince

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday said that he was satisfied with the results of the 8th Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit that ended in Tehran on Thursday.

In a statement to press early Friday morning King Hussein praised the performance of the Jordanian delegation to the summit headed by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

King Hussein, who was at the airport to receive the Crown Prince and two Jordanian prisoners of war held in Iran for the past 16 years, said that the summit's results were extremely constructive and that Jordan will spare no effort to enhance the role of the OIC.

In an arrival statement, Prince Hassan said the summit unanimously reiterated its recognition of Jordan's role in preserving the identity of Jerusalem.

He described the Iranian leadership as reasonable, rational and intelligent, and said that they relayed a message of moderation to the "world around us."

Prince Hassan said he hoped that the next three years will witness the revitalisation of the OIC and improved contacts among the Islamic countries to achieve stability based on justice.

The Crown Prince noted that the OIC summit in Tehran has endorsed an Islamic humanitarian order, which Jordan has for long advocated, and a Muslim code of conduct.

The Crown Prince valued the significance of Muslim countries differing in the way they look at issues as long as they remained locked in dialogue.

Upon departure from Tehran Prince Hassan sent cables of thanks to Imam Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, President Mohammad Khatami and former President Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Prince Hassan was received upon his arrival by King Hussein, several

Royal family members. Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, deputies of the prime minister, King Hussein's advisers, Cabinet members and senior civil and military officials and the Iranian ambassador in Amman.

Prince Hassan was accompanied by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Upper House Speaker Zeid Rifai, Minister of Foreign Affairs Fawaz Tarawneh and Minister of Trade Hani Mulki.

While in Tehran, Prince Hassan met with Iranian leaders, and heads of Muslim delegations to the summit, including Syrian President Hafez Assad, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Turkish Premier Suleiman Demirel, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa and Emir of Kuwait Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

In his address before the summit, Prince Hassan called for the establishment of a Zakat Fund, a proposal that has been welcomed by the Iranian leaders.

Prince Hassan told Jordanian journalists before his departure from Tehran that he sensed willingness to develop bilateral ties and that talks in this regard will continue.

Commenting on the summit's final communiqué issued Thursday, Foreign Minister Tarawneh said three issues figured high in the summit's resolutions: Support for the Arab people to restore their territories, support for the Palestinians to regain their land and establish their state with its capital in Jerusalem, and



King Hussein hugs Nader Subeithi, 49-year-old, at Amman Military Airport on Friday. Subeithi was released by the Iranian authorities after 11 years detention when he was arrested by the Iranian forces during the Iraq-Iran war. The release of Subeithi came after Crown Prince Hassan's efforts to grant the freedom of two Jordanian prisoners of war, while he headed the Jordanian delegation to the Islamic Summit in Tehran (Photo by Yusef 'Allan)

condemnation for Israel's procrastination in implementing the agreements signed within the framework of the Middle East peace process. The conference also called for lifting sanctions imposed on Libya, Iraq and Iran, he said.

(Continued on page 7)

Butler arrives in Baghdad, demands inspectors be allowed 'to go anywhere'

BAGHDAD (R) — Chief U.N. weapons inspector Richard Butler said in Baghdad on Friday that United Nations inspectors should be given access "anywhere" in Iraq to look for banned weapons.

"What the [U.N. Security] Council has compelled me to do is to discuss the question of access... UNSCOM [the U.N. Special Commission] must be allowed to go anywhere and see any document or interview any person," Mr. Butler said in a news conference after he arrived in Baghdad on Friday.

Mr. Butler said he would discuss with Iraqis how to solve a crisis with U.N. inspectors over inspection of so-called sensitive sites.

"There has been a crisis. I am now, in cooperation with Iraq...

[trying] to bring the crisis to an end," he said.

"There have been difficulties in achieving our access," he said adding that the U.N. Security Council agreed that "access was crucial and expressed the hope that UNSCOM and Iraq can work this out."

Mr. Butler, chairman of UNSCOM in charge of dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, was referring to access to so-called presidential sites which Baghdad has declared off-limits to his inspectors.

He said he would report the outcome of his visit to the Security Council on Thursday. Asked what would happen if Iraq did not agree to enter these sites, he said:

"If the answers to those questions prove to be no... Then it will be up to the [Security] Council to decide what are other actions will be taken."

"I hope that we will be in a position to report to the Security Council that a progress has been made and we are back on track — UNSCOM and Iraq working together objectively and quickly to get this job done," he said.

Mr. Butler is making his first visit since a crisis erupted at the end of October when Iraq expelled American members of the U.N. inspection team.

Baghdad reversed its decision and the inspectors returned back to Iraq earlier in November but were banned from entering so-called "sensitive sites," including presiden-

tial palaces, intelligence facilities and bases of Iraq's special guard.

He said he would have talks with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz on Monday to discuss access to Iraqi sites and "identify a further intensifying programme of work in some key areas where we do think that progress can be made."

Asked which arms files nearest to be closed he said:

"The missile [area] is looking very close to empty... The chemical basket is also in good shape... That is looking better... There is a material called VX and I hope Iraq would help us," he said.

"But you know about the biological weapons," he added, without elaborating.

Annan says Iraq may be allowed to sell more oil

CAMP KHOR (AFP) — U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan told U.N. peace keepers here Friday who patrol the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border that the United Nations may increase Iraq's embargo exemption to let it sell more oil.

"We are reviewing the scheme. We are going to make it much more effective and much more efficient... including the possibility of increasing the volume of oil sold," he said.

Mr. Annan, who arrived here Friday, was referring to the U.N. oil-for-food pact with Iraq which allows Kuwait's former occupier to sell limited quantities of crude oil in order to pay for food, medicine and war reparations.

Iraq has been under an oil embargo since it invaded Kuwait in August 1990, while the oil-for-food arrangement, the first partial easing of the sanctions, went into force in December 1996.

Mr. Annan's arrival coincided with that of U.N. disarmament chief Richard

Butler in Baghdad at the start of a four-day mission to convince Iraq to open all sites for inspection.

The U.N. chief also said that the United Nations was determined to continue the disarmament work "despite the temporary difficulties we have in Iraq to ensure that the work is completed, that disarmament is completed, and Iraq is not a threat to Kuwait nor to the region nor to anyone else."

Mr. Annan, who was to tour the U.N.-patrolled demilitarised zone on the border, was welcomed as he landed at Camp Khor by a Bangladeshi band of bagpipers and drummers.

He travelled here by U.N. helicopter from the Kuwaiti capital, where he arrived from an Islamic summit in Tehran.

His visit was part of efforts "to reassure the Kuwaiti people of the international community's determination that peace prevails in Kuwait and the

(Continued on page 7)

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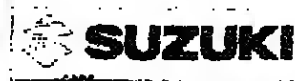


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West Bank security chief suspended from PLO faction

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The top Palestinian security chief in the West Bank, Jibril Rajoub, has been suspended for six months from Yasser Arafat's leading Fatah faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Palestinian sources said Friday.

The central committee of the Fatah faction ordered Mr. Rajoub "suspended for six months" and demanded he issue a written apology for his actions within the

Revolutionary Council, said a copy of the decision received by AFP. The decision, issued Thursday, does not affect Mr. Rajoub's position as head of the Palestinian National Authority's Preventative Security forces in the West Bank, Palestinian sources said.

The central committee took the step amid a long-running dispute between Mr. Rajoub, considered one of the most powerful of President Arafat's many

security chiefs, and the head of the committee, Sakher Habash.

It began when Mr. Habash barred Mr. Rajoub from purging members of the Preventative Security forces in Fatah administrative bodies earlier this year, the sources said. Although the bulk of its forces is made up of Fatah fighters, Preventative Security is considered a separate entity from the PLO and its factions.

Mr. Rajoub responded by

sending an angry letter to President Arafat, "insulting Habash and saying there was a void inside Fatah," and he and Mr. Habash began trading personal insults, the sources said.

Mr. Rajoub sought to stack the Fatah bodies with his allies to counteract "the domination of Habash and others who are considered to have a harder line against Israel" in the peace process, the sources said.

2 Lebanese freed from jail run by South Lebanon Army

SIDON (AFP) — Two Lebanese detainees were freed on Friday from a jail run by Israel's allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia in the occupied border zone of south Lebanon, security sources said.

Omar Ahmad and Shawki Nasrallah were released from Khiam jail to the Kfar Tebne crossing point from Israel's self-declared "security zone," the sources said. The freed men, one of whom had been detained for 10 years and the other for eight months, were taken by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to hospital in the southern port city of Sidon, they said.

Hospital sources said both men were in "poor health conditions," particularly Ahmad who suffers from kidney problems.

About 120 Lebanese are still detained, most of them without charges or trial, in the SLA-run Khiam jail, while

another 52 are prisoners in Israel.

Lebanon, along with human rights groups, including London-based Amnesty International, have denounced cases of torture and maltreatment of Lebanese detainees.

The detainees are mostly accused of refusing to join the SLA militia or of helping anti-Israeli groups, particularly the Hizbollah, in the guerrilla war to force Israel out of south Lebanon.

The ICRC has been recently engaged in negotiations in Lebanon and Israel for a possible exchange of prisoners and bodies of slain fighters between Israel and Hizbollah.

Israel wants the return of the remains of some of the 12 soldiers killed in a failed commando operation north of the Israeli-occupied zone in September. In return, Hizbollah demands the release of Lebanese detainees from Israeli jails.

Irish president visits troops in southern Lebanon

NAQOURA (AFP) — Visiting Irish President Mary McAleese on Friday inspected her country's battalion within the U.N. peacekeeping forces in embattled southern Lebanon.

Ms. McAleese, who arrived late Thursday for a three-day visit, met senior officials of the U.N. Interim Forces in southern Lebanon (UNIFIL) at Naqoura near the Lebanese-Israeli border.

She was due to visit the 500-strong Irish battalion affiliated with UNIFIL at its headquarters in the southern village of Tebne.

The Irish president was due to hold talks with her Lebanese counterpart Elias Hrawi on Saturday.

Of the 215 UNIFIL personnel killed since the force was sent to the area after Israel's

first invasion of Lebanon in 1978, 37 are Irish.

The 5,400-member UNIFIL is made up of nine contingents from Fiji, Finland, France, Ghana, Ireland, Italy, Nepal, Norway and Poland.

The official mandate of the blue berets has been to help Lebanese authorities restore control of their territory.

But UNIFIL has been unable to fulfil its mission because Israel refuses to withdraw completely from south Lebanon as called for in U.N. Security Council Resolution 425.

The peacekeepers oversee a 675-square-kilometre area. Part of the area is inside the Israeli self-declared "security zone" which it occupied in 1985, three years after its full-scale invasion of Lebanon.

Israel bans PFLP rally in Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel ordered a Palestinian theatre in Arab east Jerusalem closed for a day to prevent members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) from holding an anniversary celebration.

"The Hakawati theatre, which is supposed to serve the terrorist group on the said day is hereby ordered shut," said the police order, a copy of which was faxed to Reuters on Friday.

It said the Hakawati — officially named the Palestinian National Theatre — must keep its doors shut on Saturday, when the PFLP planned to mark 30 years since its founding. Israel considers the Damascus-based group a "terrorist" organisation.

"The police bung a one-day closure order this afternoon at the theatre's door barring the 30th anniversary of the PFLP scheduled for tomorrow," Hakawati Director Jamal Ghosheh told Reuters.

PFLP, the PLO faction headed by George Habash, opposes "PLO-Israel peace deals and still follows the doctrine of armed-struggle to destroy Israel."

Mr. Ghosheh said since the beginning of this year the Israeli authorities have been preventing Palestinian celebrations in Arab east Jerusalem held under the auspices of the Palestinian National Authority.

"Even a Chilean dance group was prevented from performing here in Arab Jerusalem this summer because the Palestinian (National) Authority's youth ministry paid them to come to the country and we invited them over," Mr. Ghosheh said.

Israel tightened its hold on Arab east Jerusalem late on Wednesday, imposing a broad ban on Palestinian political activity in the city in a move to block a PLO-backed census.

Israel illegally annexed east Jerusalem after capturing it in the 1967 Middle East war and regards it as the "united capital" of Israel, a claim not recognised internationally.

The PLO wants Arab east Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state. About 180,000 Arabs reside in east Jerusalem out of the more than one million living in the West Bank.

Egyptian opposition calls for political reforms to end terrorism

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian opposition parties have called for the government to undertake political reforms to encourage a halt to terrorism by militants seeking to take power.

"It is time to open the door today to power sharing by peaceful means, otherwise [our] society will risk more violence and terrorism," opposition parties said in a joint statement following a conference late Thursday.

The parties included the five main legal opposition parties, as well as two parties not recognised by the

government — the non-armed movement of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Communist Party.

The parties said the need for reforms was particularly urgent following "the escalation of the phenomenon of terrorism" with the massacre of 58 tourists and four Egyptians in Luxor last month.

The statement called for political and constitutional reform, especially "the cancellation of the emergency law" in effect in Egypt since the assassination of former president Anwar Sadat by Islamists in October 1981.



CROWN PRINCE MEETS ASSAD: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Syrian President Hafez Assad meet on Thursday in the Iranian capital, Tehran, on the sidelines of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit. Seen in the photo is Upper House of Parliament Speaker Zeid Rifai. Discussion at the meeting, which was attended also by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Foreign Minister Fawaz Tarawneh and other senior officials, focused on means to enhance bilateral ties and issues discussed at the OIC summit (Petra photo)

Farrakhan calls on U.S. to lift Iraqi embargo

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Chicago-based Nation of Islam, called Thursday on the United States to permit the lifting of the U.N. embargo imposed on Iraq in 1990.

"Lift the sanctions; this is not the way the greatest superpower in the history of the world should behave," the black Muslim leader said in a news conference here.

"I think that the President [Bill Clinton] needs better advice," he said.

He urged U.S. President Bill Clinton to seek to disarm the entire Middle East, and not just Iraq, in order to make peace in the region.

"Let us get Israel's weapons of mass destruction destroyed; let us ask if Syria has any... and while doing that, let us ask America to do the same." He called on the Organi-

sation of the Islamic Conference, which ended its eighth summit Thursday in Tehran, to "defy these [U.N.] sanctions and begin to look after their brothers and sisters who are dying in what I call mass form of terrorism, because it is killing innocent men, women and children for political purposes."

He said he appealed to the 54 member states of the organisation to call on U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to justify the sanctions.

Asked if he would face difficulties from the U.S. government when he returns, Mr. Farrakhan said, "My passport is the property of the U.S. government. As a citizen of the United States, I did not use my passport to enter Iraq. But I am here as a Muslim, a servant of God."

The U.S. State Department last week criticised Mr. Farrakhan's plans to travel to Iraq and Libya, saying the regimes would use the visit for propaganda purposes.

"We made it clear that a visit by Minister Farrakhan to Libya and Iraq would not be helpful, and we are therefore opposed to him going," State Department spokesman James Rubin said.

Under U.S. law, the use of a U.S. passport is prohibited in Iraq and Libya but travel to those countries is not considered illegal.

Noting that Iraq and Libya are under sanctions, Mr. Rubin said they have yet to comply with international demands.

"We believe that the visit of U.S. citizens to these countries will therefore result in their being used for propaganda purposes," he said.

Mr. Farrakhan, who arrived in Iraq Tuesday, met Wednesday with Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, with whom he discussed "the fallout from the embargo on the Iraqi population," Iraqi television said.

The Nation of Islam leader is on a three-month-long "world friendship tour," which will also include visits to Iran, Libya and Cuba.

Sanctions were slapped on Libya five years ago for its refusal to extradite two Libyan suspects for trial in connection with the 1987 bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in which 270 people died.

Iraq must destroy all of its weapons of mass destruction and comply with other provisions to end sanctions that were imposed during its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Jewish U.S. businessman to shuttle between Israel and Syria

TEL AVIV (AP) — A Jewish-American businessman will meet with Syrian President Hafez Assad in Damascus to try and get stalled Israeli-Syrian peace talks restarted, an Israeli newspaper said Friday.

Slim Fast owner Dan Abrams has shuttled between Israel and Syria in the past in hopes of bringing the two sides closer together. Israeli media reports have also said Mr. Abrams and U.S. cosmetics heir Ron Lauder own an Israeli-registered company that wants to lay a water pipeline from Turkey to

Israel through Syrian territory.

Mr. Abrams flew to the Middle East on Thursday and was to meet with President Assad early next week, the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper said Friday. Mr. Abrams was also expected to hold talks with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem. Mr. Netanyahu's aides were not available for comment Friday.

In recent years, Mr. Abrams has delivered messages between Israel and Syria, and Israel attaches great importance to the information he provides.

Yedioth said. In his current trip, Mr. Abrams will be accompanied by three members of the U.S. congress, the newspaper said, but did not provide the names.

Israeli-Syrian peace talks have been suspended since February 1996. At that time, the two sides reportedly had reached an understanding that Israel would give up all of the Golan Heights in exchange for satisfactory security arrangements and normalisation with Syria. Israel captured the Golan in the 1967 war.

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14:10Twinkle
14:30Muppet Show
15:00The Ultimate Sunman
16:00Beakman's World
16:30Neighbours
17:00French programmes
19:00Le Journal
19:30News headlines
19:35Perspective
20:00 Comedy — Perfect Strangers
20:30Prison
21:10Time Trax
22:00News in English
22:30 Feature film: "When Strangers Call Back"
23:59Ellen

PRAYER TIMES

04:59Fajr
06:22(Sunrise) Duha
11:30Dhuhr
14:14Asr
16:37Maghreb
18:00Isha

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WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology:
Intermittent showers are expected in the southern and eastern parts of the Kingdom with winds southeasterly mod-

erate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance of occasional showers, winds northerly active, and seas calm.
Min/Max temp.:
Aqaba08/15
Deserts14/22
Jordan Valley14/24
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 17 Aqaba 20 Humidity readings: Amman 45 per cent. Aqaba 54 per cent.

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Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain623029
Dr. Hisham Kan'an790286
Dr. Khaldoun Asfar699440
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Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy637055
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Al Salam pharmacy636730
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Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
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Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
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Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital019983323
Zarqa National Hospital019900360
Ibn Sina Hospital019986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital019990990
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Princess Basma Hospital021275555
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Princess Haya Hospital03314111

HOSPITALS

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Khalil Maternity, J. Amn6428116
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn6424112
Jahul Amman Maternity642302
Malhas, J. Amman636141
Palestine, Shmeisat607071
Shmeisat Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital6772779
The Islamic, Abdali 666129/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali6641640
Italian, Al-Muhajreen777101/3
Al-Rashid, J. Ashrafieh

always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (08) 52700 or (08) 523250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights:
08:25Damascus (RJ)
09:30New Delhi (RJ)
09:55Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
11:10Colombo (RJ)
15:00New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20London, Berlin (RJ)
17:40Frankfurt (RJ)
19:20Jeddah (RJ)
22:00Jeddah (RJ)
05:15Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights:
09:30Al 'Arish (PF)
13:15Riyadh (SV)
15:05Vienna (OS)
18:00Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:10Paris, Damascus (AF)
21:15London (BA)
22:30Athens (OA)
22:35Cairo (MS)
23:30London, Beirut (BA)
23:35Amsterdam (KL)
23:45Beirut (ME)
03:25Rome (AZ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights:
06:20Beirut (RJ)
09:30Frankfurt (RJ)
11:30Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
13:30Cairo (RJ)
13:45Madrid (RJ)
17:00Jeddah (RJ)
20:05Riyadh (RJ)
20:15Bombay (RJ)
20:10Larnaca (RJ)
21:30Jeddah (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
00:30 Abu Dhabi, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
Other Flights:
07:00Beirut (ME)
10:30Al 'Arish (PF)
14:15Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:45Riyadh (SV)
15:50Vienna (OS)
19:00Dubai (EK)
23:35Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:35Amsterdam (KL)
03:00Athens (OA)
04:20Rome (OA)
06:15Beirut (ME)
06:40Beirut, London (BA)

Royal Wings (RW)

(No flights on Saturday)

Jordanian POWs face bittersweet return after 16 years in detention

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Two Jordanians freed by Iran after 16 years of detention for fighting on the Iraqi side during the 1980-1988 war said they have come to life again after returning home.

Khalid Ali Awad, 36, and Nader Subeishi, 46, whose release was secured by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan during his visit to Tehran to attend the Organisation of Islamic Conference summit, arrived home late Thursday evening to a warm welcome.

Mr. Awad kissed the airport tarmac after stepping out of the plane that carried the Prince and Jordan's official delegation, while Mr. Subeishi burst into tears after seeing his youngest daughter, whom he could not recognise.

They were equally moved to see His Majesty King Hussein at the airport welcoming the delegation.

"I am in a state of shock," Mr. Awad, who was seized by Iranian forces on March 26, 1982, told the Jordan Times. "Everything has changed around me, I feel like a caveman who has just awakened from death."

But he said he was saddened to learn that his mother had died during his captivity.

"I was really depressed after they told me yesterday that my 60-year-old mother died because she was gripped by my disappearance," he said. "I feel responsible for it."



Nader Subeishi, 46, a Jordanian citizen taken prisoner during the Iran-Iraq War, is greeted Thursday by his son and daughter upon his return after 16 years in detention in Iran. His release and that of Khalid Ali Awad, 36, was secured by Prince Hassan during the OIC conference in Tehran. (Photo by Yousef 'Allan')

Ali, Mr. Awad's older brother, was moved when he learnt of his brother's return.

"It was a miracle to see my brother again, because in 1982 we learned that he went missing on the Iraqi-Iranian front, and we thought that we would never see him again," said Mr. Ali Awad.

For Mr. Subeishi, the shock of meeting his grown children was profound. "I could not believe my eyes when I saw that the infants I had left had become grown ups," he said. "I could not recognise them."

But he said he felt sorry

for his wife who developed a heart ailment because of stress caused by his detention. He was also disenchanted to learn that one of his four children was handicapped.

His oldest child then was 12 years and his youngest was four.

Officials said their release was a sign of appreciation for the Crown Prince's trip to Tehran, the first such high-ranking visit since the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran soured bilateral ties. Prince Hassan led Jordan's delegation to the summit, which ended Thursday. Jordan had been trying to

win their release for years.

The Kingdom backed Iraq in its eight-year war with Iran and many Jordanian volunteers fought alongside the Iraqi army.

Mr. Awad, who went to study in Iraq in 1982, decided to join the Iraqi forces in response to a call by His Majesty then. Mr. Subeishi, a retired army officer, said he went for a visit to Baghdad and joined Iraqi forces to help defend Arab soil.

The families of the released POWs expressed their deep appreciation to King Hussein, Prince Hassan, and others who helped secure their freedom.

Israel's West Bank withdrawal offer 'totally rejected' — Majali

AMMAN (Petra) — The Israeli government's latest offer to withdraw from parts of the West Bank has been totally rejected by the Palestinians, the Arabs, and the international community, as seen by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's recent remarks, according to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

In an interview to be published today by the Bahraini newspaper Akhbar Al Khaliq (Gulf News), Dr. Majali criticised the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for failing to honour Israel's peace treaty commitments and called upon his government to fulfil these pledges.

On the Syrian and

Lebanese tracks of the peace process, Dr. Majali stated that both countries believe in peace and are working for it. However, he added, no one can expect them to engage in peace talks with Israel at a time when both see that the Netanyahu government is violating the terms of the agreements it has already signed.

On Jordan's inter-Arab relations, Dr. Majali said Jordan maintains close and distinguished relations with Bahrain, as well as the Gulf countries.

When asked if Jordan's participation in the Doha economic conference held last month has contributed to widening the differences between the Kingdom and some Arab countries, including Syria, Dr. Majali

said that statement was inaccurate, adding that inter-Arab relations are brotherly and that efforts are being made to avoid any grey areas in these relations.

He cited the Saudi efforts spearheaded by King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz to patch up the recent differences between Egypt and Qatar as an example of a sincere Arab initiative to improve these relations.

On relations with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), the prime minister said Jordan maintains very special relations with the Palestinians. He reiterated Jordan's full support for the Palestinians in achieving their rights on their national soil.

On the freedom of the

press in Jordan, Dr. Majali said there are no limits but added that this freedom should be directed towards building rather than destroying what has been achieved.

Jordanians have the full freedom to analyse and voice their opinion of any issue of concern to them, he said.

On the rules governing professional associations, the prime minister said it is normal to review such rules and regulations periodically to ensure they are consistent with the requirements of the age or the era.

However, he said, any amendment or changes to these rules will serve the interest of the nation and the professions and will be presented to Parliament.

Lower House condemns execution of four in Iraq as 'total disregard for human rights'

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament has strongly condemned Iraq's execution of four Jordanian citizens on charges of smuggling spare auto parts, describing the executions as an unjust act reflecting a flagrant disregard for human rights.

The House, in a statement issued Thursday, demanded that the Iraqi authorities release all Jordanian detainees and refrain from executing those sentenced to death.

However, Parliament rejected a proposal by deputy Khalil Haddadin (Arab Ba'ath Party member) to despatch a parliamentary delegation to Baghdad on a fact-finding mission.

At the session, which was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour and 40 deputies, Parliament asked that the government deal with this issue through quiet diplomacy.

They urged the government not to escalate the situation between the two

countries to safeguard national interests and protect the lives of the remaining Jordanian detainees and other Jordanian nationals in Iraq, including 5,000 students in Iraqi universities.

Following is the text of the House's statement:

In following up on the question of the execution of the four Jordanians in Iraq, the Lower House of Parliament held an extraordinary meeting attended by [then] Acting Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour and several Cabinet members to hear more details from the government.

After discussing the issue's various sides and its negative impact, the House declares the following:

1. Parliament strongly denounces the execution of the four Jordanians as an unjust and inhuman act by all standards and one that reflects a total disregard for international legitimacy and human rights principles and con-

travenes the norms of hospitality and good neighbourly relations between Arab states.

2. The House expresses astonishment and shock at the measure taken by the Iraqi authorities at a time when Jordan's efforts, spearheaded by His Majesty King Hussein, are being exerted to lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq and alleviate the sufferings of the Iraqi people, and at a time when a large number of Iraqi nationals enjoy free and hospitable lives in Jordan.

3. The House urges the [Jordanian] government to take the necessary measures to ensure the safety of all Jordanians living in Iraq as well as other parts of the world.

4. The House calls on the Iraqi authorities to release all Jordanian detainees immediately, rescind any and all execution orders against them, secure fair trials for the accused in a manner that will safeguard their full right to defence, and inform the Jordanian government of

all details connected with the detainees.

5. The House voices its anger at this outrageous act, which occurred after the Iraqi government totally ignored Jordanian attempts to resolve this problem.

6. The House will pursue developments concerning Jordanian nationals living in Iraq, especially those sentenced to death, to ensure that none are executed or harmed.

7. The House expresses its deep condolences to the bereaved families.

8. The House reaffirms its support for the Iraqi people in the face of their present plight and will continue to extend support to them as well as world forums to alleviate their suffering resulting from the sanctions. This stand reflects the Jordanian people's sense of national belonging and Jordan's continued drive to enable Iraq to regain its status among the world community.

Ambassadors to Austria, France present credentials

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan's Ambassador to Austria Mazen Amouti Friday presented his credentials in Vienna to Austrian President Thomas Klestil as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary.

At the presentation ceremony, President Klestil praised the bilateral relations between the two countries and the Kingdom's

policies and commitment to the basic values of democracy.

Dr. Amouti conveyed His Majesty King Hussein's best wishes to President Klestil and the Austrian people and voiced the King's interest in further bolstering relations.

He praised Austria's supportive position for Arab rights and voiced hope that the country will play an

active role in pushing the peace process forward when it joins the European Troika early next year and when it assumes the chairmanship of the European Union by mid-1998.

Dr. Amouti also presented his credentials to the heads of several international organisations.

Also Friday, Jordanian Ambassador to France

Adnan Talhouni presented his credentials to French President Jacques Chirac. Mr. Talhouni voiced Jordan's interest in strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation.

President Chirac praised the unique relations between both countries and expressed his country's desire to further enhance its relations with Jordan in various fields.

British organisation offers assistance for Arab students to study in U.K.

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A representative of the London-based University Information Consultancy Service (UICS), an organisation that helps Arab students enroll at British universities, Friday said his office seeks to further strengthen Arab-British cultural and educational relations.

"Our service is offered free of charge to students from the Arab World wishing to study in one of

Britain's 180 universities. This enables them to get acceptance and start their courses," Adam Dinham told the Jordan Times.

"UICS, which has been assisting students from the Arab World to benefit from British higher education since 1994, offers expert guidance and assistance and works with students to find suitable courses in a British university," he said, adding that "with its extensive contacts in the Middle East, Africa, and around the world, UICS understands the needs of foreign

students living and studying in Britain and provides the help they need."

"Being registered in Britain as a charity association, the UICS is able to raise funds from British organisations and universities to finance its programmes and service to the students, and that is why it offers them free of charge service," according to Mr. Dinham, who serves as the UICS charity coordinator.

"Our main aim is to bolster Arab-British relations through educational and

cultural services and to help the graduates bring British education to the Arab World as well," he stated.

Mr. Dinham, who ends a visit to Jordan Monday in the course of his tour, said UICS has been helping students study while at home in the Arab World through distance learning, which he said "can be ideal for those already established in work or with family responsibilities and who cannot find the time or money to live and study abroad for significant periods."

Japan donates \$6.3 million to UNRWA

AMMAN (AFP) — Japan has contributed \$6.3 million to the cash-strapped United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the organisation said in a statement Thursday.

Japan, once the third largest donor to UNRWA, announced earlier this month it would cut its overall support in 1998 by two-thirds to \$10 million, according to agency spokesperson Sami Mushasha.

At a conference in New York on Dec. 2, donor countries pledged a total of \$126 million for 1998,

including \$70 million promised by the United States, UNRWA's chief supporter.

Other nations, including the U.K., have yet to make pledges.

However, Mushasha Thursday warned that the agency may have to cut services next year because of a projected \$50 million deficit for next year out of a budget of \$343 million.

"We have already cut to the bone. We have been able to maintain our services, but they are severely overburdened. If the donor countries do not

come through with more money, we will face a worse situation next year," Mr. Mushasha said.

For his part, UNRWA Commissioner General Peter Hansen said in Amman Wednesday that "the agency will never think of reducing its services...in fact, it is trying to improve them," according to the official news agency, Petra.

Meanwhile, around 6,500 UNRWA workers held a symbolic half-hour work stoppage Thursday in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to protest austerity

measures, UNRWA union president, Abdel Karim Juda, told AFP.

The agency introduced severe austerity measures earlier this year, which sparked an outright revolt among the 3.2 million Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and neighbouring Arab countries to whom it provides services.

Japan's contribution will be formalised by its ambassador, Takayuki Kimura, and the UNRWA commissioner general in Amman Sunday.

Shura Council holds year's final meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Islamic Action Front (IAF) Shura Council Friday held its fourth and last session in its mandate for this year.

The session, which was chaired by the council's acting President Abdul Aziz Kleib Shreideb, focused on domestic, Arab, and Islamic issues of concern, including

the economic sanctions on Iraq, Libya, Sudan, and Iran. The council's members called for developing the role of the front in various aspects and fields.

They condemned Israeli intransigence in its dealings and policies and praised the Palestinian people's struggle against and resistance to

the Israeli authorities. They also praised the struggle of the Lebanese resistance movement, particularly Hizbollah, against the Israeli army.

The council supported the recommendations of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, which was held in Tehran last week.

Orthodox group announces plans for conference examining Jerusalem patriarch's land policies

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A Jordanian and Palestinian Orthodox group has announced plans to hold a conference in Amman next year in a bid to stop what they describe as the "mismanagement" of Greek Orthodox properties by the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

"The conference will mainly focus on the Orthodox properties that are being sold by the patriarch," according to George Mdanat, a member of the Los Angeles-based Task Force to Save the Orthodox Christians in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Dr. Mdanat told a press conference Thursday that another aim of this meeting, which is expected to take place in August, is to "Arab-

bise" the Orthodox church in the Holy Land.

The gathering will group Muslim and Christian personalities in Jordan and Palestine, as well as delegations of Orthodox communities living in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and South American countries, he said.

A delegation of the task force recently met with an advisor to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and informed him of their intention to hold the conference in Jordan.

Dr. Mdanat charged that the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem, Diodoros, has sold some of the Church's lands to Israelis and neglected Arab Orthodox interests in the Holy Land.

Dr. Mdanat, who headed a nine-man delegation that recently ended a one-week visit to Jordan, the Palestinian self-rule areas, and the northern Galilee.

Constantin Nasr, a member of the delegation, said during their visit, they toured Orthodox-affiliated churches and "were shocked by the spiritual negligence of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchy in Jerusalem."

"There are churches that have been ignored by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch for years," Father Nasr said.

Richard Ballou, the pastor of St. Athanasius Antiochian Church in Sacramento, California, who accompanied the delegation, said the conference will help in rectifying the alleged injustices of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch.

"I am here because I am

very concerned and sympathetic with the suffering of the Orthodox faithful here. In the past three days, we have been up and down Jordan, [seen] numerous towns and churches, and we have heard the cries and the feelings of the Orthodox people here in Jordan," said Father

Ballou.

"The conference will bring a great sense of unity...what we are looking for is not a revolution against the Patriarch but an awakening in which Arab Orthodox here can be in charge of their destiny," he added.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* Comedy "Der Garten" (The Garden) at Goethe-Institut, Jabal Amman at 4:30 p.m.

SEMINAR

* "Positive Dealings With Children" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 4:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Photo exhibition by Edgardo Rodriguez entitled "Arab Presence in Cuban Architect-

ture" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 20.

* Plastic (abstract) by Iraqi artist Dhaia Khazali at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Dec. 18.

* Exhibition of prints by Algerian artist Koraishi and calligraphy by Iraqi artist Hassan Massoudi at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31. Also displaying paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz, and works by contemporary Arab artists.

* "Journey Within" by Pakistani artist Gulgee and his son, sculptor Amin Gulgee, at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (Tel. 630128), until Dec. 15.

Heartfelt Congratulations Ramtha/Jordan

All the family members and relatives in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan congratulate

SUSAN

daughter of Prof. Sayel Ramthan, head of the Accountancy Department at Bahrain University, on the occasion of her engagement to their dear son

Monther Ramthan
Congratulations

Blazing fire severely disrupts traffic at Heathrow airport

LONDON (AFP) — A major fire at London's Heathrow airport was brought under control Friday three hours after it broke out in one of its four passenger terminals, airport authorities said.

However the blaze, which began in a fast-food restaurant in Terminal One in the early hours of Friday, caused massive disruption to air traffic at Heathrow, Europe's busiest airport.

No one was injured in the fire, ambulance crews reported.

Flights out of Terminal One, the busiest of the four, were cancelled while incoming flights were diverted to the other terminals or to London's Stansted airport, northeast of the capital, and Southampton, southern England.

There is major smoke damage and Terminal One "is closed until further notice," said a British Airways Authority spokeswoman. "We need time to assess the damage but we

are working flat out to reopen as soon as possible," she said.

The airlines British Midland, Sabena, South African Airways, Cyprus Airways and Aer Lingus which use the terminal cancelled their flights.

So too did the German airline Lufthansa which cancelled 24 morning flights into London, but planned to add more later in the day to compensate.

Domestic flights, notably to Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Birmingham, were particularly disrupted. Authorities advised passengers to phone for details of their flights before arriving at Heathrow.

Flights into Terminals Two, Three and Four resumed after they were closed down briefly as a security measure.

Street traffic was locked solid around the airport after the closure of roads leading to Heathrow at the height of the morning rush-hour into London.

Some people abandoned

their cars at the roadside and walked, luggage in hand, to the airport, said BAA officials.

London's underground railway service to the airport was also suspended, adding to the blockages.

Police criticised travellers for driving to the airport despite radio and television warnings that their flights would be cancelled or severely delayed.

"The airport is not closed, but access is very limited," an airport spokesman said.

More than 100 firefighters battled the blaze which began at around 0440 GMT in the roof of a Burger King restaurant in Terminal One, and which rapidly spread through air ducts to nearby stores.

"The fire seemed to have started in the roof of a Burger King restaurant, but what started the blaze is still not known," said a fire brigade spokesman.

High-tech thermal imaging cameras were used to help firefighters locate the blaze in a 200 metre verti-

cal duct carrying hot air and fumes from the restaurant.

As the fire began spreading rapidly from the restaurant in the Terminal One departure lounge, rescue services began evacuating personnel from the building. Witnesses described the scene during the evacuation as "utter chaos."

London Heathrow served 55.7 million passengers in 1996, and is the world's fourth busiest airport.

Every day, the airport handles more than 1,000 flights to 200 destinations. At peak hours, a flight takes off from Heathrow every 90 seconds.

On a normal day about 180,000 people pass through the airport, almost half through Terminal One, said Roger Cato, the airport's director-general.

A Heathrow spokesman said the airport authorities were doing everything they could to get passengers to their destinations, including use of buses and trains where appropriate.



Emergency services attend the scene of a major fire at London Heathrow airport's Terminal One (Reuters photo)

N. Irish Unionists snub Sinn Fein demand for talks

BELFAST (R) — Northern Irish Protestants leader David Trimble Friday brushed aside a Republican challenge to emulate British Prime Minister Tony Blair and meet Sinn Fein, the IRA's political arm, face to face.

Mr. Trimble, the main opponent in the British-ruled province of political links with the Irish republic, said talks would only "feed the ego" of Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams.

Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) leader Trimble also said it was "worse than a distinct possibility" that the outlawed Irish Republican Army would relaunch a guerrilla campaign aimed at achieving an all-Ireland state.

Sinn Fein leaders were in upbeat mood after the landmark London talks with Mr. Blair at the prime minister's official 10 Downing Street residence.

It was the first meeting since 1921 when, after a bitter Anglo-Irish war, Republicans reluctantly accepted a partition deal that kept Northern Ireland under British rule.

Mr. Blair has injected fresh verve into flagging Northern Ireland peace efforts since he ended 18 years of conservative rule with a landslide victory at the May 1 election.

He is pinning his hopes on a settlement to all-party talks taking place in Belfast, but warned Mr. Adams that her intelligence reports regarded the IRA truce as firm.

Mr. Blair and his Irish counterpart, Bertie Ahern, were due to discuss Northern Ireland on the fringe of a European Union summit that started in Luxembourg Friday.

Mr. Trimble is a pivotal figure in the Anglo-Irish sponsored talks, which Mr. Blair wants to produce measures by next May to end decades of guerrilla strife.

His UUP, which draws its support from among Northern Ireland's Protestant majority, sits at the talks table with other Northern Ireland political parties but refuses to speak to Sinn Fein.

Mr. Trimble hardened that policy Friday, telling BBC Radio there was no merit in a face-to-face meeting with Mr. Adams.

"It would only feed his ego, which doesn't need it, but, more importantly, it would only reinforce his delusions."

"It is quite a remarkable situation in the (Belfast) talks. Virtually all the parties are engaged seriously in the real world... we know the broad outlines of the settlement that is leading to, Sinn Fein, on the other hand, is in a fantasy world."

Mr. Trimble, a long time scourge of the IRA, said he

was astonished by a statement from Britain's Northern Ireland secretary, Mo Mowlam, that her intelligence reports regarded the IRA truce as firm.

"That statement can only be true in a very narrow and limited sense in that the intelligence coming to her is saying the ceasefire is firm today, tomorrow, next week perhaps, but that looking into the new year it is not firm," Mr. Trimble said.

"It shouldn't be a surprise because Sinn Fein-IRA have not yet accepted the democratic process."

Mr. Blair invited Mr. Adams to Downing Street to keep up the momentum of the peace process and illustrate that he is prepared to treat Sinn Fein as a legitimate political party as long as the IRA's guns remain silent.

Sinn Fein says negotiations with the UUP must be the next step in the process.

"World leaders are prepared to meet Sinn Fein and take at face value what Sinn Fein says about their commitment to the peace process, and test us," Party Chairman Mitchell McLaughlin told BBC television.

"That is the litmus test and if we betray that trust, then yes, come out and condemn us. But you can't do it if you refuse to talk to us... let's start the negotiations now," he said.

Danish wind power industry could be Kyoto winner

COPENHAGEN (R) — Denmark, a world leader in wind power technology, is gearing up to produce more clean-energy turbines as a result of the Kyoto accord to slow global warming.

The windfall could be worth as much as 120 billion Danish crowns (\$17.8 billion) between now and 2010, the financial daily Borsen reported Friday.

"We hope that Kyoto will bring about a high interest in the business," the Danish Wind Power Industry's spokesman Steffen Damborg told Reuters.

Denmark hopes that the treaty, which mandates an average cut of 5.2 per cent in the greenhouse gas emissions blamed for a warming of the planet, will prompt national governments to legislate in favour of cleaner energy.

"We don't know whether the U.S. Congress is going to accept the treaty, but certainly we are encouraged. The five per cent reduction in greenhouse gases is bet-

ter than nothing," Mr. Damborg said.

Borsen said the European Commission's aim to have windmills capable of generating 40,000 megawatts of electricity by 2010 would create orders worth 250 billion crowns.

That would mean 120 billion crowns of business if Denmark maintained its share of the world wind

turbine market, the paper reckoned.

Asked to comment on these figures, Mr. Damborg told Reuters, "we have not yet made calculations of what the Kyoto agreement means for us."

There were major uncertainties about funding for the European Union windpower target, and the Danish market share in future, he said.

By the end-1997 the world will have wind turbines with a capacity of 7,500 megawatts, Danish industry figures show.

These turbines are expected to produce about 13 terawatt hours of electricity in 1998, about one thousandth of the world's total electricity consumption.

Denmark's enthusiasm for wind power was underlined Thursday when Neg Micon A/S said it had jointly acquired a large wind power project from Kenetech.

Windpower INC, which is operating under chapter 11 of the U.S. bankruptcy code, includes more than 4,000 wind turbine generators and related infrastructure located in the Altamont Pass near San Francisco.

Neg Micon said its strategy was to upgrade older wind power plants with modern technology in North America.

Japan to set up office to monitor 'greenhouse gas' cut

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan is planning to set up an office under Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto to make sure it meets its targets to reduce "greenhouse gas" emissions, the top government spokesman said Friday.

"The cabinet should take concrete, effective measures in a comprehensive and systematic manner to prevent global warming," Chief Cabinet Secretary Kanezo Muraoka quoted Mr. Hashimoto as telling ministers.

The office will coordinate the work of the ministers for trade and environment and other areas and will aim to revise the energy-saving law and enhance government publicity campaigns on the issue. It will also help development of anti-pollution technology and multi ways to support developing countries in cutting gas emissions, Mr. Muraoka said.

International negotiators at Japan's ancient capital of Kyoto Thursday agreed a legally-binding 5.2 per cent cut from 1990 levels by 2008-2012 in "greenhouse" gases blamed for global warming.

The European Union is to cut six greenhouse gases by eight per cent, the United States by seven per cent and the Japanese hosts six per cent.

International Trade and Industry Minister Mitsuhiro Horiuchi said his ministry aimed to submit a bill to drastically revise the energy-saving law to the next parliamentary session to be convened in early January.

Mr. Horiuchi also said the ministry planned to "promote the establishment of nuclear power plants" to achieve the target.

The trade ministry has been saying Japan would need to build 20 more nuclear power plants to achieve the goal by promoting a shift from thermal power plants which burn fossil fuels.

The ministry has already secured agreements for the establishment of nine nuclear power plants, Mr. Horiuchi said.

Rwandan refugee camp buries dead after massacre

MUDENDE, Rwanda (AFP) — Tutsi refugees were buried Friday following the massacre at the Mudende camp in north-western Rwanda, where at least 271 people died in an attack blamed on Hutu extremists, according to the latest toll.

A local administrative source said the raid late Wednesday on the camp for Tutsi refugees from the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) claimed 271 lives. An earlier figure said 231 people were killed, but small white flags on newly dug common graves indicated that the number was higher.

The commander of the mainly Tutsi army in the region, named as Colonel Kayumba, told AFP that the attackers, previously said to be Rwandan Interahamwe militiamen and local people, came both from the town of Kanama and from the border with the DRC.

"It was a coordinated attack. They began to shoot, throw grenades and set fire to the tents," Col. Kayumba said.

"Intervention by the (Rwandan) military was

complicated by the panic which swept through the camp," he added. The Mudende site housed some 17,000 ethnic Tutsis who had fled the Masisi region in the northeast of the former Zaire, where President Laurent Kabila seized power last May.

"This situation is clear proof of the kind of war we are fighting," the colonel stated. "This is a defenceless camp, which had no pretensions to any property or land. We are simply trying to put a stop to genocide."

Behind the officer, more than a dozen Rwandans had dug common graves for the burial of men, women and children. Bodies which had been hacked apart with machetes were wrapped in the plastic sheeting that had served as part of their makeshift shelters.

Lifting up one of the sheets, Col. Kayumba revealed the burned corpses of a woman and a child, looked at journalists and asked: "And these, you think they were fighters?"

The government in Kigali, installed by the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) which seized power

in 1994, has come under fire for the human rights record of the new Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), but is also seeking to defeat Hutu militiamen and former government troops blamed for the genocide of between half a million and 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in April to July that year.

Workers Friday carried the dead to the graves from a building where many bodies had been stacked up.

Well away from the soldiers, a teacher in his 40s said he came from the town of Rwerere, which had been attacked four days earlier, causing him to flee to the camp, which was raided in turn.

"In one week, I was almost killed twice," he said. "What do you want me to do? They came at midnight and encircled the camp, armed with rifles, grenades, axes and spears. They put up barriers on the roads, the tracks and all around to prevent the soldiers from coming."

The teacher, who gave his name as Lambert, said that he estimated that between 700 and 900 people may have been massacred, though the initial official toll

was 231.

"The rebels did everything to succeed," he said. "They did their job and they left satisfied."

"The morning after the massacre, all the refugees fled the camp," the teacher added. He also left Thursday, but went back Friday to collect a few clothes and other belongings before installing himself beside a road several kilometres distant from the camp.

A transit camp at Nkamira was placed at the disposal of people seeking shelter by staff of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but Mr. Lambert said he had already found it full.

The local mayor indicated that he was still trying to understand what had happened. "I live 500 metres from the camp," he said. "I heard shots around 3:00 a.m. These people came to find me and tell me what was going on."

"I did not see the attackers myself," he said, "but there could have been a thousand of them, militiamen, peasant farmers from around here, women."

Scandal-plagued Indian politician freed from jail

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A high-ranking former ally of Indian Prime Minister Indira Kumar Gujral was released Friday after more than four months in jail on corruption charges, reports said.

Lalno Prasad Yadav was greeted by thousands of cheering supporters as he emerged from prison in the eastern city of Patna, a day after he was granted bail by a court.

The controversial Yadav, 50, then drove to a Hindu temple to pray, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said. He later addressed his supporters.

Mr. Yadav, a former chief minister of Bihar, India's second most populous state with some 90 million people, was detained July 30 in connection with a \$271-million embezzlement case.

His arrest came after he resigned as the Bihar chief minister, making his illiterate wife, Rabri Devi, his successor. Patna is the Bihar capital.

Mr. Yadav had been accused of allegedly helping to siphon off funds from a state agricultural fund. He has refuted the charges, and denied links to the case in which several politicians and officials are also involved.

Mr. Yadav Friday said he would not take over charge from Rabri Devi, a political novice until her elevation to the chief minister's post.



India's Congress Party president Sitaram Kesri (left) addresses party leaders during the Congress Working Committee meeting in New Delhi. The meeting was called to chalk out their poll strategy for February's general election (Reuters photo)

power-transfer till after the elections. Both of us will jointly campaign and sweep the elections," an ebullient Yadav said.

"She has been pestering me since yesterday to take over ... but I have turned down her plea," he said. "She has been elected chief minister by the legislators."

Mr. Yadav was formerly the president of Mr. Gujral's Janata Dal (People's Party). He quit the post and formed his own party early this year.

PTI said Rabri Devi was among the thousands who waited patiently outside the jail to welcome Mr. Yadav. The others included Bihar state ministers.

A former shepherd, Mr. Yadav has carefully cultivated his rustic image with his country bumpkin hairstyle and traditional Indian attire of flowing shirt and pyjamas.

He first became the chief minister of Bihar, which borders Nepal, in 1990 and was reelected for another five years in 1995.

But his popularity took a beating following his alleged involvement in the corruption scandal, forcing him to break away from the Janata Dal, which he had helped set up in 1988, and resign as chief minister.

Fresh elections to the Indian parliament are due early next year.

Chinese dissident slams Japan over Nanjing massacre

BEIJING (AFP) — Dissident Lin Xinku lashed out at Japan on the eve of Saturday's 60th anniversary of the Nanjing massacre, saying the country did not want to admit to the wartime crimes committed by the Imperial Japanese Army.

Mr. Lin, founder of an association seeking war damages from Japan, targeted Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's September trip to China and accused the premier of avoiding a visit to Nanjing.

"Sixty years later, Mr. Hashimoto could have taken advantage of the opportunity to go to Nanjing and apologise to the Chinese people, but he did not utter one word about the war during his visit," said Mr. Lin.

China Saturday marks the 60th anniversary of the Dec. 13, 1937, Nanjing massacre during which between 140,000 and 370,000 Chinese are believed to have been massacred by Japanese Imperial Army troops.

Mr. Hashimoto had expressed "profound regret" over Japan's aggression during the war with China, which lasted from 1937 to 1945.

In July, Chinese President Jiang Zemin said improved relations with Tokyo depended on Japan's recognition of its militarist past.

Mr. Jiang was quoted Friday by the official Xinhua news agency as saying that Japan must "draw lessons from history so as to enable a sustained, steady and healthy development of the Sino-Japanese relations."

The president made the comments during a meeting with a delegation led by the head of Japan's leading economic daily, Nihon Keizai Shimbun.

Some Chinese dissidents are critical of Beijing for normalising ties with Tokyo in 1972, without having received war reparations.

Shanghai-based dissident Bao Ge, who left for exile in the United States last month after spending three years in a labour detention camp, had called for a national referendum on the question of war reparations.

Mr. Lin said a commemoration of the massacre would "prevent Chinese from forgetting this national humiliation," while Japan moved towards admitting its aggression during the war, like Germany had.

"When Japan has sincerely admitted its historic crimes, friendship between the two countries will have a solid foundation," he said.

In Nanjing, leading Chinese historian Zhu Chengshun said: "Sino-Japanese relations should be built on respect for and acceptance of historical reality."

"All peace-loving people, not just Japanese, should learn a lesson from this history in order to achieve real peace in the world," he added.

Mr. Zhu said attitudes were changing in Japan and that this year six Japanese cities had organised a hotline to the Rape of Nanjing and 18 soldiers who had participated in the massacre had called in.

3 more believed struck down in Hong Kong by deadly 'bird flu'

HONG KONG (AFP) — Three more Hong Kong residents have been diagnosed with a deadly "bird flu," a health department spokesman said Friday.

The spokesman said the first new suspected case involved a five-year-old girl suffering from respiratory infection. The second was a 24-year-old woman who was admitted to hospital on Dec. 12.

The girl is now in a stable condition but the woman is receiving intensive-care treatment for pneumonia, he added.

The third case involves a 37-year-old man who was discharged on Dec. 9 after recovering from pneumonia which saw him hospitalised on Nov. 24, the spokesman said.

"The department is looking into these three new cases and is contacting their families and relatives for further investigation," he added.

Ko Wing-Man, deputy director of the hospital authority, denied suggestions the virus had already spread in Hong Kong. The authority would closely monitor the situation, he added.

"We can cope with the situation with our present facilities. If the virus really spreads, the hospital authority will use all its available resources to deal with it," Mr. Ko said.

Two of the four previously-declared "bird flu" victims have died and there are fears of a possible epidemic.

Nine hospital staff with "flu-like symptoms" have been sent home on sick leave amid fears they could have contracted the virus when they came into contact with two patients infected with H5N1, officials said earlier.

One of the patients, a 54-year-old man, died last Friday and the other, a 13-year-old girl, remains in serious condition in hospital.

Some 90 hospital staff had contact with the pair and it was "not uncommon" for up to 10 per cent of employees to suffer minor ailments at any time, the spokesman added. The nine staff on sick leave had been tested for the virus and officials were awaiting the results, she said.

Local and international

experts are frantically searching for the source of the virus, which first appeared in humans when it killed a three-year-old boy here in May. A two-year-old boy was also infected but later recovered.

The experts have speculated the virus could be transmitted through contact with chickens and other poultry. Hong Kong officials have been joined by experts from the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and other international specialists in the hunt for the source of the virus and preventative measures.

World Health Organisation (WHO) officials in Geneva said leading researchers would this week decide whether a vaccine should be developed.

Some 4,500 chickens died from H5N1 at three farms here in April and hundreds of thousands of birds are reported to have died in similar outbreaks in southern China.

Traders say chicken sales are down 30 per cent as fears mount over the outbreak, though health officials have said it is not possible to contract the virus from eating poultry.

The experts say one likely route of infection is via contact with chicken faeces and the public has been warned to maintain hygiene.

Education officials have urged schools to separate children from ducks, geese and chickens kept as educational pets, to prevent the spread of the deadly flu.

Headteachers were warned against raising the birds in schools to stimulate learning interest among students, in a directive to all kindergartens, primary and secondary schools.

The outbreak of the virus has also added to pressure on Hong Kong's embattled tourism sector, with visitors around the world asking whether the territory is safe.

Hong Kong tourism offices around the world had been receiving calls from worried people.

The last time a new flu strain broke out in Hong Kong was in 1968, which killed tens of thousands. That strain became known as Hong Kong flu.



Isabelle Coutant-Peyre, the lawyer of Carlos the Jackal, the legendary guerrilla mastermind of the 1970s and 80s, smiles as she arrives at a Paris law court for the start of the Jackal's trial (Reuter photo)

Carlos faces first reckoning for terror career

PARIS (R) — Armed police took up positions at the Paris Law Court Friday as Carlos the Jackal, the legendary guerrilla mastermind of the 1970s and 80s, faced the first reckoning for his terror career.

Three years after French agents spirited him from Sudan, Michel Ramirez Sanchez faces a life sentence if convicted of the 1975 gunning down of two French counter-espionage officers and a Lebanese accomplice-turned-informer, and the wounding of a third officer.

Some 70 paramilitary gendarme reinforcements have been drafted, and Law Courts staff had to pass through metal detectors. Unusually, the court magistrates and jurors are to be given round the clock protection by elite police bodyguards throughout the trial.

Carlos was to be driven in from prison for the trial opening around 1 p.m. (1200 GMT) in the massive Law Courts on the Ile de la Cité in the heart of Paris.

The flamboyant Venezuelan, now a thick-set 48-year-old, was given a life sentence in absentia in 1992 for the killings. French law allows him a retrial in person.

His lawyer Isabelle Coutant-Peyre said Carlos, embittered by more than three years in solitary confinement that he has described as "torture", was in fighting mood and looking forward to the week-long trial.

"He is a convinced Communist revolutionary who gave his life to his cause... he has nothing to be sorry for. His struggle goes on in a different form," she told television before the trial.

But his former wife and fellow guerrilla, German-born Magdalena Kopp, told Stern magazine this week she no longer saw him the same way.

"Carlos was never on anybody's side, only his own," said Ms. Kopp, who has an 11-year-old daughter by Carlos. "I would like to see the Carlos myth destroyed."

Ms. Coutant-Peyre, a militant left-winger hired after Carlos dismissed a string of counsels, admitted she would take a backseat to her client, who would defend himself and make a statement "of interest to the whole world."

But she hinted he would not make any spectacular revelation on his terror trail, which French authorities say killed more than 80 victims across Europe and the Middle East.

His strategy risks looking as outdated as the shadowy world he flourished in — split by the cold war, frightened by radical Arab states and unfamiliar with the security checks his audacious kidnaps and attacks helped make into standard airport equipment.

Carlos intends to dispute the legality of the trial, arguing that he was abducted from Sudan and his presence in France was illegal. "This trial cannot take place. It would be infamous for France, the home of human rights," Ms. Coutant-Peyre said.

Carlos is being tried for the "Rue Toullier shooting", named after the left bank address in Paris where the unnamed DST secret agents carrying out routine checks met their death — unaware they had stumbled on one of the world's most dangerous guerrillas.

The state prosecutor in the earlier trial said that DST senior officer Jean Herranz and officers Raymond Dous and Jean Donatini were carrying out checks on the contacts of Lebanese Michel Moukharbal, a Palestinian activist who was later found to have been overseeing Carlos' guerrilla group.

They called at his lover's flat, on Toullier street, but found it was being occupied by three Venezuelan 'students'.

When Moukharbal pointed at one of the occupants, one 'student' took out a pistol and fired with deadly precision. Dous was shot through the neck. Donatini and Moukharbal through the head. Herranz was badly wounded, he has since died.

Fingerprints in the flat were identified as those of Carlos, who reappeared five months later as the chief of guerrillas who took 11 oil ministers hostage at a Vienna OPEC meeting — including another international star of the time, Saudi Arabia's Sheikh Zaki Yamani.

Carlos admitted carrying out the killings in an interview to the Arab daily Al Watan Al Arabi, which he later denied giving and called a fabrication by Israel's Mossad secret service.

Moukharbal was reported to have been a double agent for Israel, and Ms. Coutant-Peyre said the Rue Toullier shooting was a Mossad plot to harden France's stance towards Palestinians.

Carlos is being investigated for six other attacks which killed 17 people in France in 1979-83, but another trial is unlikely for a year. Prison sentences he faces in France may ensure he will never have to answer for crimes in Germany and Austria, which also want to bring him to trial.

Albright pledges up to \$40m in aid to Congo

KINSHASA (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Friday pledged between \$35 million and \$40 million in aid to help rebuild the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and encourage democratic reforms.

Speaking after an hour of talks with DRC President Laurent Kabila, she noted however that the aid was contingent on approval by the U.S. Congress, which, she said, "is very interested in how President Kabila does carry out his obligations on issues of human rights and democracy, as of course (are) President (Bill) Clinton and I."

The meeting with Mr. Kabila — Ms. Albright's first — was "an important step towards building a strong relationship," she said.

Ms. Albright, noting that Mr. Kabila had "made a strong start with his government stabilisation plan," said she had urged him at length to democratise his regime, to hold elections soon and to assure freedom of association.

Mr. Kabila, however, caused consternation at the press conference that followed by dismissing the recent arrest of an oppositionist, saying Arthur Z'ahidi Ngoma, head of the Forces of the Future party, was "not a politician, but a man who distributes tracts calling for violence."

As Ms. Albright looked on with a pained smile, Mr. Kabila said the DRC had no political prisoners, and charged that Mr. Ngoma "writes tracts here at a foreign embassy, and he divides people."

Mr. Kabila added: "In your countries, those who distribute such tracts are arrested... there will be lots who go to prison if they incite people to violence. Long live democracy."

Mr. Ngoma was arrested on Nov. 25 during a party conference in Kinshasa — against the ban on political activities imposed by Mr. Kabila shortly after he took power in May, ousting the dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

State Department spokesman James Rubin told reporters later: "Ms. Albright does not know the facts of the case brought up in the press conference, but the impression left by President Kabila's statement does not accord with the strong view that she expressed on political expression to him during the meeting."

Mr. Rubin added: "Obviously every government has the right to counter those who incite violence, but basic freedom of speech is the right of any individual... Ms. Albright intends to pursue the subject... vigorously, but she believes it is important to engage with this government to establish a civil society that respects human rights and the rule of law."

"On this issue clearly the government of Congo must improve its record," Mr. Rubin said.

Ms. Albright said at the press conference: "In the coming weeks, we will elaborate with Congress a package of \$35 to \$40 million to assist Congo in developing democratic institutions infrastructure and government means" and to improve health, sanitation and financial facilities.

She cited the rebuilding of the Black River Bridge, which was destroyed by forces backing Mobutu. Ms. Albright also said U.S. Peace Corps volunteers would soon be returning to the country.

The top U.S. diplomat said the United States enjoyed "a great deal of leverage" with international lenders "in terms of how other countries spend their development assistance," adding: "We have a catalytic effect and we plan to use that."

Ms. Albright said the DRC may see some debt relief for its burden estimated at some \$13 billion. She also reiterated that the United States would pay \$10 million — an amount scorned by Mr. Kabila last week as "absolutely insufficient" — into a DRC reconstruction fund set up by the World Bank at a "Friends of Congo" conference in Brussels last week.

"I believe the package proposed is quite generous," Ms. Albright said.

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Gibraltar rejects Spanish proposal for joint rule

GIBRALTAR (R) — Gibraltar's government Friday dismissed as "totally unacceptable" a Spanish proposal to share sovereignty with Britain over the tiny colony and urged London to reject it outright.

"As the Spanish proposals are clearly not acceptable to the people of Gibraltar, they should be rejected outright by the British government," Chief Minister Peter Caruana said in a statement.

"The Gibraltar government will be formally asking the British government to do so."

The statement came two days after Spanish Foreign Minister Abel Matutes met his British counterpart Robin Cook in London to talk about the idea of shared sovereignty.

Mr. Cook told Mr. Matutes

the proposal had no chance of success as long as the inhabitants of the British colony remained implacably opposed.

Mr. Caruana, in his first official response, said: "There is no point in... discussing these proposals."

The Spanish government, which had long demanded sole sovereignty over the outpost on its southernmost tip, formally proposed shared rule for an indefinite period of time after which Britain would cede full control to Spain.

Mr. Cook told reporters after the meeting Wednesday: "The people of Gibraltar should not be put under siege" by Spain's claim to the territory.

U.S. police rescue 2 children held hostage

ORLANDO, Florida (AFP) — Police early Friday shot and killed a suspected murderer and rescued unharmed two children he was holding hostage inside a house here since Tuesday.

"The children have been safely removed, they have been reunited with their families," Police Chief William Kennedy said at a press conference, adding that a police officer was slightly wounded in the action.

John Armstrong, 39, a robber who had been released from jail in March, had

taken the boy and girl hostage after bursting into a house Tuesday while fleeing police who suspected him of murdering a man in a park.

Armstrong had ordered the mothers of two-year-old Tedi Priest, and four-year-old Malcolm Phillips out of the house after entering at gunpoint.

Throughout the standoff, the mothers begged Armstrong not to harm their children. Armstrong apparently fed and bathed the children while the house was under siege by police.

John Armstrong, 39, a robber who had been released from jail in March, had

N. Korea says outcome of talks depends on 'equality of each side'

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea said Friday the success of North-South peace talks, which started in Geneva this week, would depend largely on "the equality of each side" and how tensions were reduced.

"Success in the talks involving the long-time belligerents and parties concerned depends largely on how the equality of each side's position and the atmosphere of confidence are ensured," the North's foreign ministry spokesman said.

"We will do all we can to this end."

The remarks, carried by Pyongyang's mouthpiece the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), mirrored here, were the first official comment from the North on the talks.

Commentators here suggested the spokesman was hinting at full diplomatic relations between Washington and Pyongyang.

North Korean diplomats have said privately that Pyongyang felt "cornered" by the fact that all three other participants in the four-way talks — China, the United States and Russia — had full diplomatic ties.

The comment on tension reduction was taken here to mean the withdrawal of the 37,000 troops in South Korea. Without directly linking the "atmosphere of confidence" remark to the troop withdrawal demand, the ministry spokesman spoke at length on the subject, which the North has consistently said is the main "barrier" to peace.

"If confrontation is to be uprooted in the peninsula, it is imperative to put an end to the U.S. military intervention and, for this purpose, it is necessary to have a peace agreement concluded between (North Korea) and the United States and U.S. troops withdrawn from South Korea," the spokesman said.

"As our delegation made clear at the talks, this is one of the main and essential matters we want to have solved through the talks."

"It is our principled stand that its solution will make it possible to solve other matters smoothly."

5 Pakistani judges refuse to participate in court hearing

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Five Pakistani Supreme Court judges have refused to join 10 colleagues hearing petitions against ousted chief justice Sajjad Ali Shah, legal sources said Friday.

The petitioners have challenged the 1994 appointment of Mr. Shah, deposed earlier this month in a power tussle with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, on the grounds that he was given the post in violation of seniority rules.

Justice Saeeduzzaman Siddiqui, head of the 10-judge bench hearing the

petitions, confirmed the action by the five judges. During proceedings Mr. Siddiqui said that originally 15 of the total 17 of Supreme Court judges were to sit in a full court to hear the petitions.

"I asked them twice, but they refused to sit on the bench," Mr. Siddiqui said, adding he could not force them to participate in the hearing.

Earlier Mr. Shah's counsel, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, objected to the constitution of the bench headed by Mr. Siddiqui.

A split among the Supreme Court judges surfaced last month as Mr. Shah, at the head of a five-judge bench indicted the prime minister and several of his parliamentary colleagues for contempt of court.

The court building was stormed by pro-Sharif demonstrations on Nov. 29, halting proceedings. Mr. Shah was replaced by an interim chief justice a day after President Farooq Ahmed Leghari resigned on Dec. 2, saying he could not submit to the government's demand to sack the chief justice.

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Agenda extended to globe

THE FINAL communique of the Islamic summit held in Tehran last week touched upon a variety of issues of direct concern to the Islamic World but neglected to refer to others of wide interest to mankind. To name but a few, the Kyoto conference on greenhouse gases, the Ottawa meeting on landmines and the commemoration of the 49th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights went without a mention in the Tehran Declaration. All these international endeavours are worthy of the attention and care of the Muslim Nation. How could it be that the communique endorsed the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights but failed to give at least equal prominence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Needless to say that the Universal Declaration goes much beyond Cairo's as it is now universally viewed as the basis for all international human rights norms, and the greater number of the Islamic countries have ratified most of the human rights conventions emanating from the Universal Declaration. At a time when the entire world was celebrating the adoption of the international declaration, the Islamic summit chose to ignore it altogether. The same goes for the Ottawa treaty on anti-personnel mines. The Islamic countries should have at least noted the milestone treaty banning landmines and gave an opinion on it. True, many Islamic countries have signed the treaty. It is not certain, however, that they will all ratify in due course. Major powers, such as the U.S., Russia, China, not to mention Israel, have refrained from signing the treaty. Consequently it might have been wise by the Islamic conference to have used extra pressure against them to do so.

As for the Kyoto conference on global warming, the absence of any meaningful reference to the just-announced draft treaty banning six greenhouse gases may give rise to the accusation that the 55-nation conference in Iran was not tuned in to global issues that touch the life of every human being.

While it may be too late to rectify these shortcomings, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) should be called upon to devote more time and energy to follow up on these issues and take them up for debate and resolution the next time it plans a major gathering of the member states.

To be fair, the Tehran conference did try and succeed in focusing on and highlighting the interconnectedness among all nations on this earth. It would be to the advantage of us all to extend the global linkage to where it can naturally reach.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallah blasted the Iraqi authorities for executing four Jordanians for allegedly being involved in smuggling operations, describing the act as a stab in the back of the Jordanian people. The Jordanians have sympathised with the Iraqis in their ordeal, in the face of the unjust embargo imposed on them since 1990: opened their doors to Iraqi nationals and their borders to their leaders and to trade, said the writer. The execution of the four Jordanians came as a political decision and an expression of a hostile stand by the Iraqi leadership against Jordan, Qallah charged. It is shocking to see the Iraqis act in this manner at a time when His Majesty King Hussein has been exerting strenuous efforts to prevent further military strikes against the Iraqi nation and have the sanctions lifted, noted the writer. He said that despite this act, the Jordanian people can only continue to sympathise with the Iraqis who are subjected to sufferings of all kind and can only hope that their nightmare will soon be over.

Al Dustour's Ali Safadi criticised certain Muslim nations, particularly Turkey, for their actions that contradict their statements at the Organisation of Islamic Conference meetings in Tehran. While the Islamic countries' leaders, including Turkey, were meeting in Tehran to decide on measures against Israel and to revive the boycott of Israeli goods, Ankara was opening its arms to the Israeli defence minister to discuss ways of bolstering Turkish-Israeli military co-operation against the neighbours of Turkey and Israel, namely the Arab and Muslim states, noted the writer. He said Israel's defence minister's visit to Turkey was timed to coincide with the start of the Islamic conference in Tehran as if Turkey and Israel wanted to tell the world that what the Muslim leaders say in public is totally different from what is happening on the ground. The writer said there is no need for Islamic summits if the member nations of the OIC are not committed to implementing their resolutions. He said the Arabs and Muslims should not request that European and other nations exercise pressure on Israel to execute U.N. resolutions since Muslim nations themselves are openly collaborating with the Jewish state, demonstrating support for its illegal practices.

Jordanian Perspective

Just what was Iraq's motive?

IF THERE was ever an unfriendly/unbrotherly action between two friendly/brotherly countries, it was unquestionably the execution of four young Jordanians by Iraq last week. The executions not only shocked all Jordanians but jolted us into thinking there has to be something seriously wrong in Iraqi thinking. For sure, the Iraqi leadership prefers to starve 20 million of its population and to cause the death of one thousand children daily rather than declaring its resignation and opening a new page in Iraq's relations with the whole world. This personal lust to stay in power at whatever cost, including the tragic suffering of innocent children and citizens, can never be justified by any Qawmi, Arabic or Islamic or humanitarian criteria. The higher echelon of decision makers could not have been unaware of the importance that the Jordanian leadership and people attach to the life of every single Jordanian and of the serious repercussions of such a despicable act as the putting to death of four young Jordanians who, rightly or wrongly, were accused of smuggling automobile spare parts worth less than \$1,000.

The immediate recall of the top Jordanian diplomat from Baghdad, Chargé d'Affaires Adel Suweidan, and the expulsion of seven Iraqi diplomats from Amman are only symbolic of the rage that the executions sparked among Jordanians.

Jordan displayed extraordinary patience while Baghdad simply ignored all appeals to provide detailed information related to the murder of a Jordanian embassy driver and the disappearance of a sachel of Jordanian passports last year. Baghdad handled the affair its own way, revealing only sketchy details and turning a deaf ear to Jordanian requests for a full briefing on the incident.

Jordan, not making a strong public issue of the affair, opted instead for quiet diplomacy in its effort to get to the bottom of things despite the obvious Iraqi stonewalling.

That is only one example. There have been eight instances when Iraqi government agents used Jordan as their backyard and an arena for settling scores with anti-regime dissidents through assassination and poisoning.

Throughout all these incidents, Jordan exercised utmost self-restraint. Definitely there is more than meets the eye in the latest incident. The Iraqi authorities certainly do not presume that there would be no backlash from such an unfriendly, unbrotherly act as executing Jordanians for an alleged crime punishable by a fine and a few months in prison. Had Jordan taken a similar path of belligerency and applied the same parameters in Jordan then numerous Iraqis who enter the Kingdom every day would be tried, sentenced and put to death in similar fashion.

But that would be cold-blooded murder, not "execution." And the fact is, Jordan takes pride in its legal system.

Jordan cannot accept an argument that the executions were a mistake. Such a "punishment" could not have been carried out without approval from the very top of the Iraqi leadership. And that fact has triggered a wave of questioning on why Baghdad took this most extraordinary step at all. Definitely the action could not have been meant as a "message" to Iraqis against "smuggling". Iraqis all know the ruthlessness of their regime, so there would be no lesson learnt from the executions of three Jordanians. Was it meant as a warning to Jordanians and others against "smuggling" into Iraq? Again, that would be elementary. The Iraqi regime sees the flow of smug-

gled goods into and out of Iraq, whether through Jordan, Syria, Iran, Turkey or Saudi Arabia, as thumping its nose at the United Nations sanctions against Iraq. And, if anything, the volume of smuggling across the 500-kilometre frontier between Jordan and Iraq is nothing when compared with the size and quantity of goods entering Iraq through Syria, Turkey and Iran. Furthermore, it is very difficult, almost impossible indeed, to believe that the Iraqi officials wanted to invite attention towards smuggling from/to Jordan, if at all there is any of significant volume. Obviously, the pointers are all in one direction: Baghdad seems to feel fortified with its newfound friendship with some of its neighbours to the extent that it not only cares little for its ties with Amman but is also ready to provoke a crisis in the relationship with Jordan and its people.

What we cannot fathom is the real motivation or objective of the executions, unless of course Baghdad did want to draw a diplomatic as well as popular counter-action from Jordan leading to a serious estrangement in ties. If that was the case, then Baghdad has succeeded, and the next phase in the drama orchestrated by the Iraqi authorities will not be too late in unfolding. But one thing is sure: Baghdad, despite its newfound alliances, will not be the one to call the final curtains if it made the mistake of taking Jordan and Jordanians for granted the way it did with the Kurds when Halabcha's total population was gassed; or the Holy City of Karbala when 20,000 Shi'ite Iraqis were decimated. No one should underestimate our resolve here in Amman not to let anyone get away with murdering Jordanians.

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Writers express shock, outrage over Iraqi executions of Jordanians

REVIEWED BY
ELIA NASRALLAH

Comments in the local dailies last week focused on the execution of four Jordanian students in Iraq, the Islamic conference in Tehran, the Middle East and local Jordanian issues.

AN AL RA'I columnist Faded Fanek deplored the execution of four Jordanian students in Iraq as a shameful act and a severe blow levelled at the Jordanian people who have supported Iraq in the face of unjust sanctions and the continued attempts by the U.S. to starve and humiliate the Iraqi people. Even if we consider that smuggling is a crime punishable by death, according to Iraqi laws, Dr. Fanek said, the Iraqi leadership could have acted otherwise by handing down prison terms on the accused out of respect for the Jordanian people. Still, he said, the Jordanian government should share the blame for its failure to inform the public about the sentence of execution. It is not true that Jordan had not received sufficient information about the fate of four citizens before their execution, Dr. Fanek said, quoting the Jordanian weekly Shiha as publishing a full report about this affair on Oct. 25, 1997. He said the Iraqi authorities committed an unforgivable sin against Jordan, but the Jordanian authorities should not be absolved of blame as they neglected their duty.

Sultan Hattab, also of Al Ra'i, accused the Iraqi authorities of executing the four Jordanians without a trial and thus committing murder in cold blood. Noting that the Jordanian people have supported Iraq all along and opened the door to Iraqis to freely visit Jordan, Hattab said Iraqi nationals living in Jordan are accorded respect, good treatment and hospitality and Jordanian authorities have never taken arbitrary measures against any of them. Saying that the four Jordanians were not accused of spying against Iraq, the writer said Americans and other nationals who were captured by the Iraqis for spying or who were picked up after their planes were downed in the war were released, and it is shocking to see the Iraqis treating citizens coming from Jordan, the friendly Arab country, in this shameful manner. He said it would be most difficult for Jordan from now on to try to defend the Iraqi regime before the world.

In reviewing the Organisation of Islamic Conference held last week in Tehran, Taher Adwan of Al Arab Al Yawm said no one expected the summit to liberate Palestine or eliminate poverty in the Islamic World. But the Muslim masses, he said, hoped that their leaders would adopt policies that would at least improve the political climate in the Muslim World and re-establish some kind of true solidarity among the Islamic nations. The fact that all Muslim nations were invited to or attended the conference means that the leaders of the Islamic World can overcome the present differences dividing

them and achieve many things for their people, Adwan said. The writer said the Islamic Nation is going through a challenging phase in its history and the Muslims around the world continue to hope that the Tehran declaration will be translated into positive facts on the ground. He said the Muslim World does not require a miracle to achieve its aspirations and all that the Muslim regimes need is true solidarity and a will to serve the present and future generations.

Commenting also on the OIC meetings in Iran, Faded Fanek said the conference was a major success for Iran and a terrible failure for the U.S. Dr. Fanek said Iran was able to gather the Muslim nations in Tehran while the U.S., which practically sponsored the Doha economic summit, failed to persuade the Arabs to take part in that meeting. By con-

military exercises involving Israel, Turkey and the U.S. represent a real challenge and a serious act levelled at the Arab and Islamic World, said the writer. While the Islamic foreign ministers who met before the summit in Tehran tried to defuse tension between Syria and Turkey, Ankara was opening its arms to the Israeli defence minister to discuss war strategy against Syria and the Arab World, Adwan said. It is most distressing to see Turkey, a Muslim Nation, acting against the very interests of the Islamic World and serving the interests of the U.S.-Israeli alliance, said the writer. He said Israel is quite happy to find in Ankara a new ally against the Arabs and a force that would help the Jewish state perpetuate its aggression on the Arab Nation.

An Al Dustour editorial stated that Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu has succeeded in persuading U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to back Israel's stand in the deadlocked Middle East peace process. Instead of exerting pressure on the Israeli government to implement the Oslo accord, Albright has demanded that the Palestinians take what she termed as difficult decisions, which means making more concessions to Israel, noted the daily. By condoning the Israeli government's policies the U.S. is not helping the cause of peace, said the paper which added that Washington seems to be succumbing to the wishes and desires of the Zionist lobby in the U.S. Congress. The paper said that while members of the ruling Likud government in Israel have demonstrated their dismay over Netanyahu's policies, one can see in the Congress overwhelming backing for the extremists at the helm of the present Israeli government.

On the domestic front, Al Dustour's Nazih Qousus said the government should change the present system of retiring civil servants at age 60. When most people reach that age they become more mature and will have accumulated vast experience and skill that can help improve the public administration system, the writer claimed. To prove this point, he said, many of those who were retired at 60 have assumed leading positions in the private sector businesses and have made these businesses a real success. Why then, he asked, does the government seek to apply the present retirement system on ordinary civil servants but does not apply it to ministers who sometimes are appointed when they are over 70 years old. He said the retirement age should be set at 65 and the government should allow civil servants to retire if they choose to at 60.

LETTERS

Attack on humanity

To the Editor:

HAVING HEARD of the attack on humanity in Iraq on Tuesday Dec. 9th, I was shocked by such an act of brutality. I am only 15, and people would say I don't know very much. But this, I do know; such a decision taken on the lives of these four Jordanian students was a poor one, based on lack of experience, and conscience. This act has re-inforced the concept that "All Arabs are terrorists," not to the rest of the world, but to the Arabs themselves. In the world, capital punishment is on the decline, criminals are being executed, for murder, and other heinous sins. But the sin here lies with the person who calls himself "human," the person, who, by this decision, probably would make the worst of the simplest of situations. I hope this person would be made to pay for this disgusting decision.

Adnan Qutieshal
Amman

Enough 'mistakes'

To the editor:

TO PUT it mildly, the words appalled, disgusted and shocked do not come near expressing the way I felt when heard the news that four Jordanian students were, summarily, executed in Iraq.

At first, I figured there had to be some logical explanation that would prompt a sister Arab country, that owes so much to Jordan in terms of support and solidarity, to speedily execute four Jordanians. To warrant such extreme and merciless judgement, I thought, they must have committed some unspeakable acts like premeditated murder, or were caught spying for some hostile foreign government. I wished I were right, for that would have made some sense. But when I found out that all they did was smuggle JD620 worth of car spare parts, I was flabbergasted and outraged.

I just want to come out and ask, whether politically correct or not, can anyone tell me: What on earth is wrong with these people? And I do not mean here the good Iraqi people, who happen to be the primary voiceless victims of their government. I mean, unequivocally, the government of Iraq. Haven't they made enough mistakes already? Haven't they inflicted enough damage and suffering.

I do not apologise for my candour, because I know that my country would not treat any of the forty thousand Iraqis living in Jordan in any way other than humane, courteous and brotherly.

As much as my heart goes out to the resilient and brave Iraqi people who have endured so much suffering, I cannot but abhor the cold-bloodedness with which the Iraqi government took away the lives of these Jordanian citizens.

Walid Maaytah
Amman

'Snide' comment

To the Editor:

I JUST found your site on the Internet, and it is intriguing. Just wanted to make a snide comment — perhaps — about the story "Iran's conflicting voices on West emerge at Tehran Islamic Summit." It is fascinating that the Ayatollahs Khamenei and Khatami seem to be working at cross purposes, representing different strains or ways of looking at the "West." I don't know if President Khatami uses speech writers, but some of the hardliners in Iran might arrest them for making him sound almost like Shimon Peres.

Daniel Vaisner
Dallas, Texas
USA

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Israel's police minister says Vanunu still a security risk

TEL AVIV (AP) — In an angry jail house meeting, Israel's police minister told nuclear spy Mordechai Vanunu he still posed a threat to state security and would remain in solitary confinement, a top aide confirmed Friday.

Mr. Vanunu, who spilled Israel's nuclear secrets in 1986, has been held in an isolation wing at Ashkelon prison in southern Israel for 11 years.

During a tour of the prison, Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani visited Mr. Vanunu's wing

and the encounter quickly turned tense, the Maariv daily said.

"I fought on the battle front to protect you — and you jeopardised the security of my children and the state. You must pay for that," Mr. Kahalani told Mr. Vanunu, according to Mr. Kahalani's aide, Rafi Levy.

Mr. Vanunu asked to be placed in a cell with Palestinian security prisoners, a request Mr. Kahalani turned down. "You revealed state secrets and now you are asking to move into a cell with Arab security prisoners?" Mr. Kahalani told Mr. Vanunu.

"I did not reveal state secrets. I saved the state. You will not longer use nuclear weapons," Mr. Vanunu countered.

"You still pose a danger to our existence, therefore you will stay here," Mr. Kahalani told Mr. Vanunu as he left his cell.

Mr. Vanunu, 43, was kidnapped by Israel's Mossad spy agency in Rome in 1986 after giving the Sunday Times of London photographs of the inside of the Israeli nuclear reactor

King describes Iraq's execution of Jordanians as 'heinous crime'

(Continued from page 1)

Baghdad because their families and children live there.

Monday's execution prompted the government to order the expulsion of seven Iraqi diplomats and to recall its charge d'affaires in Baghdad, Adel Sweidan, for consultations. He was expected to arrive in Amman late on Friday, sources said.

As the two slain men were buried, two Jordanians held in Tehran for 16 years for fighting alongside Iraq's army during its 1980-1988 war with Iran returned to new-found freedom.

At the Sahah cemetery, relatives prevented the father of Mr. Bsharah, 35, from opening the coffin to kiss his son's forehead.

The executions drew angry reactions from the government and ordinary Jordanians alike, many of whom blindly supported President Hussein during his August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Even Jordan's pro-Iraqi parties slammed Iraq's execution.

which was ostracised by the West because of its perceived tilt towards Baghdad during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, did not deserve such treatment.

"Iraqis here are living in a secure atmosphere and are not subjected to harm while the Iraqi government is executing our sons in Baghdad," Ms. Bsharah told reporters.

"What has happened is inhumane and should not go unpunished. Saddam Hussein is responsible for what has happened," she said. His sisters, brothers and relatives stood nearby screaming and weeping.

In Baghdad, the Iraqi government said on Thursday it was surprised over Jordan's reaction following the execution of the four smugglers.

"Iraq is surprised at the fuss stirred by the Jordanian government over the execution of four Jordanian criminals," said a two-page statement by the Iraqi foreign ministry.

"The Jordanian authorities know full well, through the memorandums which were addressed to them, that these persons were involved in trafficking from Iraq, which is a crime punishable by death."

"Crimes of trafficking and economic sabotage in times of war or when the country is under an unjust embargo must be severely punished," said the statement.

Iraq has been under a U.N. embargo since its invasion of Kuwait.

"Throughout the previous years, the parties that are targeting Iraq, especially the U.S. and Zionism, have organised

plans and gangs to empty Iraq from its capabilities that enable it to face the unjust embargo," the statement, which was made available to the Jordan Times, said.

"We will not forgive and show leniency to the criminals who are looking for illegal gain at the expense of Iraqis," added the statement.

"We hope that the public opinion in Jordan will understand this issue and an incident like this should not be used to sabotage the deep and honest relationship between the two countries," the statement said.

The statement said that the four cooperated with a fifth Jordanian, named Ra'ed Atallah, who lives in Jordan in their smuggling attempts.

The new crisis is the second in less than two years between the two countries.

In 1995, Jordan's relations with Baghdad were damaged when Jordan granted President Saddam Hussein's son-in-law Hussein Kamel political asylum following his defection to Jordan.

At that time, Jordan lashed out at the Iraqi regime and called for a "political change in Iraq."

Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid criticised the Iraqi government and said that the execution of the Jordanians "will badly affect the relationship" between the two neighbouring countries.

"The incident is a bleeding wound which will never heal easily," said Mr. Rashid.

"We did our best to save the lives of the four Jordanians but unfortunately the Iraqi authorities did not cooperate and turned deaf ears," he told

the Jordan Times on Friday.

He said the government has no information about the number of Jordanians who remain in Iraqi jails.

"Iraq should not forget what Jordan has done for them and what it is still doing. They should review their stand and ensure the safety of Jordanians in Iraq," Mr. Rashid said.

The minister also said that the government is conducting contacts with Iraq to stop the execution of a fifth Jordanian who was sentenced to death also for the smuggling charges.

Meanwhile, the London-based Iraqi National Congress (INC) criticised the execution of the Jordanians in Baghdad and said that the move was part of the "regime's execution campaign directed by the Iraqi government against the opposition" where the INC claims that more than 800 persons were executed since last month.

The group claimed that those executed included Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen and at least 30 members of the INC.

The Council of Islamic Organisation and other societies in Jordan also denounced the Iraqi move and sent a message to the Iraqi ambassador in Amman to express their "shock" over the executions.

The Council urged the Iraqi government to revoke the death sentences of a fifth Jordanian national who is awaiting execution on the same charge.

King praises performance of delegation to OIC

(Continued from page 1)

Muslims to reflect the bright image of Islam which has been distorted by the enemies of the religion. It also called for respecting the sovereignty of each state and stressed the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. It also called for the peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue.

On the economic front, Minister of Trade Dr. Hani Mulki said the conference adopted a number of recommendations relating to enhancing economic and trade ties among member states.

Dr. Mulki said the summit discussed long term financing of trade, the establishment of a multilateral Islamic clearing house, an investment guarantee facility, a trade infor-

mation network and standardising specifications and metrology.

Dr. Mulki said the summit also discussed the establishment of specialised science and technology networks covering water, biotechnology, marine sciences, renewable energy and space. It also discussed the establishment of the Islamic organisation for science and technology and a spe-

cialised quality control centre.

On information and cultural affairs, Dr. Mulki said the summit adopted an Islamic strategy for information and a plan of action for information in the Islamic world, in addition to an ethical code for the press.

The recommendations have been sent to the member states for their opinion.

Annan says Iraq may be allowed to sell more oil

(Continued from page 1)

region," he told journalists earlier at Kuwait City airport.

Mr. Annan was greeted in the capital by Foreign Minister Sahab Al Ahmad Al Jaber Sahab and accompanied on the flight to Camp Khor by the U.N. Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) commander, Major General Efraim Tarvainen of Finland.

Camp Khor, inside the demilitarised border zone, is the main UNIKOM

camp on the Kuwaiti side, near Umm Qasr on Iraq's side where the 1,084-strong military mission has its headquarters.

The force was set up after the Gulf war to patrol the demilitarised border zone and inspect the facilities. In April, the number of unarmed military observers in UNIKOM was reduced from 230 to 194, to cut costs. Kuwait meets two-thirds of the expense of maintaining UNIKOM.

The bulk of the multi-

national force is made up of a Bangladeshi mechanised infantry battalion of 765 soldiers and 125-stroop support units from Argentina, Austria and Germany.

UNIKOM monitors a 200-kilometre land border and 40-kilometre border at sea. On land, the demilitarised zone extends five kilometres into Kuwait and 10 kilometres into Iraq.

Kuwait, which has captured several Iraqi infiltrators seeking to escape economic hardship in their

sanctions-hit country, has been building an electrified fence on its side.

The heavily-fortified border already comprises a series of sand berms and ditches, built after the Gulf war which rolled back a seven-month Iraqi occupation of the emirate.

Mr. Annan is to meet the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Sahab, and the crown prince and prime minister, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Salim Sahab, before leaving Kuwait on Sunday.

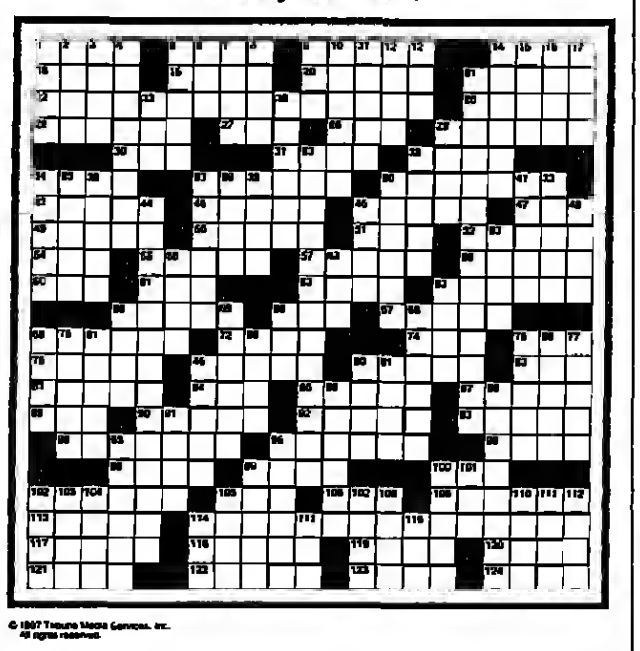
The Saturday Crossword

DINING AROUND

By Dorothy B. Martin

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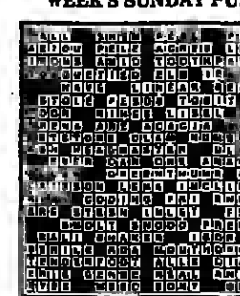
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By Harold B. Counts

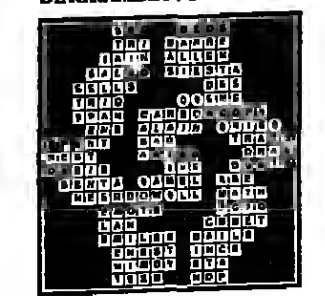
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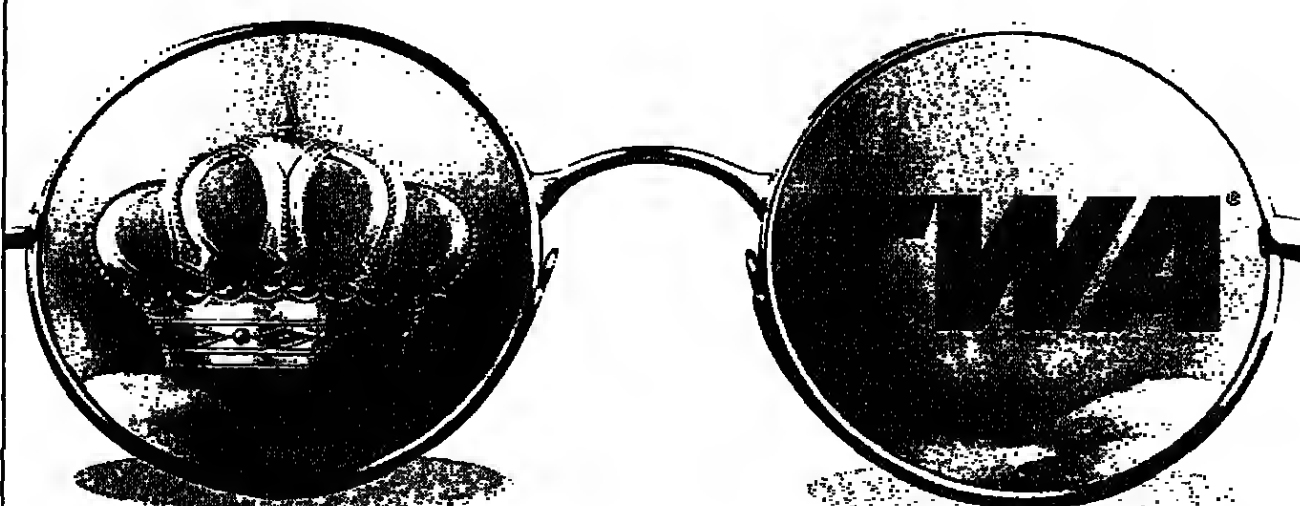
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Irbid's new industrial park leaves Jordanians divided

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — For a handful of businessmen, a new industrial zone in the northern city of Irbid is a blessing in disguise, granting them products free trade status on U.S. markets.

For others, the Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ), housing 45 plants making anything from textiles to electronic components, is a free gift for Israel — allowing it to benefit from Jordan's infrastructure and cheaper labour force to boost trade with Washington, its main ally in the region.

The QIZ, established at Irbid's sprawling Al Hassan Industrial Zone, is at the heart of U.S.-Israeli-Jordanian efforts to deliver an elusive peace dividend to many of Jordan's disenfranchised population.

Accelerated steps by Israel-based global multinationals to shift capital, investment, production lines and plans to Irbid — three years after the 1994 peace treaty — is so far the most tangible byproduct of a peace dividend that otherwise failed to match the hopes of its proponents.

Behind this move is a sole conglomerate, Century Investment Group, A Jordanian public shareholding company with an estimated equity value of more than \$100 million, it

has defied the soured political climate hampering Arab-Israeli business links.

Jordan and Israel, in the presence of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, signed the agreement designating the QIZ at a controversial Middle East and North Africa economic conference held in Doha late last month.

"Why should we allow Israel to achieve its goals at the expense of ours," Fakhri Bilbeisi, board member of the Jordan Businessmen Association, said in an interview.

But like Mr. Bilbeisi, many politicians and economists feel bitter that the privilege of having free access to America's market will come at the expense of involving at least 11 per cent input from Israel and the Palestinian market — economically held captive by the Jewish state.

This, they said, will help "reinforce economic normalisation with Israel at a time when Tel Aviv has failed to respect the peace deals it had concluded with the Arabs."

The hardline policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, elected in May 1995, have fuelled a ground swell of hostility by most of Jordan's business elite towards any dealings with Israel, even at the price of economic prosperity.

Under the QIZ deal, to take effect later this month, enterprises established at Irbid-Al-Hassan industrial state, 150 kilometres north of Amman and a 40-minute drive to Israel's industrial heart, will use what some officials call "a gift that will allow their goods to penetrate U.S. markets free of customs duties without reciprocity."

Washington, the main sponsor of peace talks, has thrown its full weight behind the deal — a step towards "demonstrating that the positive effects of the peace process continue to be felt and the wheels of cooperation continue to turn."

But analysts and officials remained divided on the benefits it will give to Jordan's economy, 12 times smaller than that of Israel.

Israel should not be granted the benefit of entering into partnerships or investments in Arab countries until a just and comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace is achieved, some analysts said.

But officials said the deal will not give much to Israel, which already has a free trade pact with the U.S.

Minister of Industry and Trade Hani Mulki said that Jordan was "getting a privilege" by exporting custom-exempt goods to the U.S. while imposing custom fees on American imports.

Washington, in return, will help cement "peace and stability in the region" and use it as a model for future regional cooperation.

For Jordan, the QIZ will promise new markets for products manufactured in Irbid and will provide over 1,500 jobs for the Kingdom's growing unemployed.

Despite these tangible benefits, many Jordanians have remained hostile.

Businessman Lubib Qamhawi, who opposes

the 1994 peace treaty, said the QIZ will be in favour of Israel.

"Israel will benefit from the exploitation of Jordan's cheap labour (one-eighth that in Israel) and the infrastructure," he said.

"The Israelis will make use of Jordan's manpower at Jordanian rates, which means fantastic savings to them. We will simply be tools in the Israeli economic wheel and the yield we will be getting... will be minimal," Dr. Qamhawi added.

He went on to say: "Why should a country like Jordan decide to accept this and fall into this trap voluntarily. Why should Jordanian officials substitute Arab economic cooperation with that of Israel, knowing that any input from the Arab World's private sector would be better."

But Omar Salah, Chairman of Century Investment Group, disagreed.

He said Jordan's "inexpensive" labour and infrastructure, coupled with the free trade status on the U.S. market, should be seen as giving the Kingdom a comparative advantage allowing it to become a global competitor.

It will also give the country a "unique opportunity to achieve sustainable growth," he said, adding that Jordan will become one of four countries enjoying free trade status with the U.S. after Canada, Israel and Mexico.

Mr. Salah's group is employing 1,200 at its 12 factories established at the QIZ — all on a 50/50 partnership basis with world multinationals.

Mr. Salah, 30, said he expected the deal to generate over 1,100 new job opportunities in Century's factories — manufacturing everything from women underwear and dairy products to textiles and electronics.

His group has been

under fire from many businessmen who accuse it of encouraging economic normalisation with the Jewish state by luring Israeli capital, investment and production lines into Jordan through joint ventures.

However, in the eyes of Mr. Salah, "Century is a company stealing away multinational investments based in Israel to Jordan". Joint venture deals with Israel-based Western multinationals have in over a year and a half resulted in the manufacture of a wide range of brand name goods, mainly pre-sold to U.S. markets, he indicated.

"We brought Sara Lee, Motorola and others and we are bringing to Jordan things that Israel fought hard to get. We're bringing to Jordan investments, jobs, export opportunities and high-tech," Mr. Salah told the Jordan Times.

He said the QIZ will also help improve the balance of trade between Jordan and the U.S., heavily in favour of Washington. Amman's exports to the United States currently stand at \$16 million a year.

Recent media reports have said that Israeli textile companies had laid off hundreds of workers due to a shift of production to neighbouring Arab countries — Jordan and Egypt.

The cutbacks, which have seen some 5,000 jobs lost in the past few years, were largely due to Israeli textile firms shifting their production to these countries where salaries are 10 to 15 times lower than in Israel.

Officials and diplomats said the QIZ does not only offer Israeli-based multinationals along with fully-owned Israeli plants the rationale to shift to Jordan, but is a magnet for global multinationals seeking to shift some Asian operations closer to Europe.

Several Jordanian industrialists said they were unhappy by the QIZ deal

because its privileges are limited to factories based at Irbid's Industrial Zone, one of three such areas across the Kingdom.

They said their industries would be left to suffer from what they called erratic economic policies, high tariffs and government red tape.

Dr. Mulki disagreed saying that the QIZ was not limited to a specific number of industries there. Land, he said, was available at the zone and was sufficient to house a large number of companies.

"It is for anybody who wants to build a factory there and enjoy the privileges as long as he commits himself to doing what is required by the QIZ," he said.

"We will usher him into doing that," he emphasised.

Mr. Salah expressed hope that the Jordanian business community would forge ahead with efforts to extend the terms of the QIZ to other industrial parks in Jordan, such as the Sahab park and the Zarqa and Aqaba free trade zones.

Dr. Mulki said if all of Jordan's industrial zones were to enjoy non-reciprocal free trade status on U.S. markets, Washington might ask for its products to be reacted in a similar way.

"It is an area of reciprocity. Just like I send a product into the U.S. free of tax and customs, the Americans can do the same," he explained.

He expressed his appreciation to the U.S. for supporting the establishment of the QIZ in Irbid, as a major turning point for Jordanian efforts to join the global economy.

"We did not need more investment in infrastructure to achieve the goal of the QIZ, and in doing so, we hope we are able to deliver the fruits of peace in a faster way," the minister concluded.

HOTEL INTER-CONTINENTAL JORDAN BIDS FAREWELL TO CHAWQI AYUB AND WELCOMES THE NEW GENERAL MANAGER



A COCKTAIL reception was held at the Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan on Thursday, 11th December, to bid farewell to the General Manager Chawqi Ayoub who has been transferred to the Sultanate of Oman to manage The Gulf Forum Hotel in Muscat. Mr. Ayoub arrived in Jordan six years ago. Since then Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan introduced new restaurants and outlets and the hotel started major expansions. Jonathan Soper will succeed Mr. Ayoub as General Manager for Hotel Inter-Continental Amman in addition he is also the Regional Director of Opera-

tions for Jordan. Mr. Soper arrives from the United Arab Emirates where he held the position of General Manager for the Abu Dhabi Inter-Continental Hotel. Mr. Soper has been with the Inter-Continental Hotels & Resorts for more than 18 years. The cocktail reception was hosted by the Board of Directors of Jordan Hotels & Tourism Co. Ltd., the Management of Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan and attended by a large number of officials, businessmen, travel agents, members of the diplomatic missions and press.

Christmas & New Year

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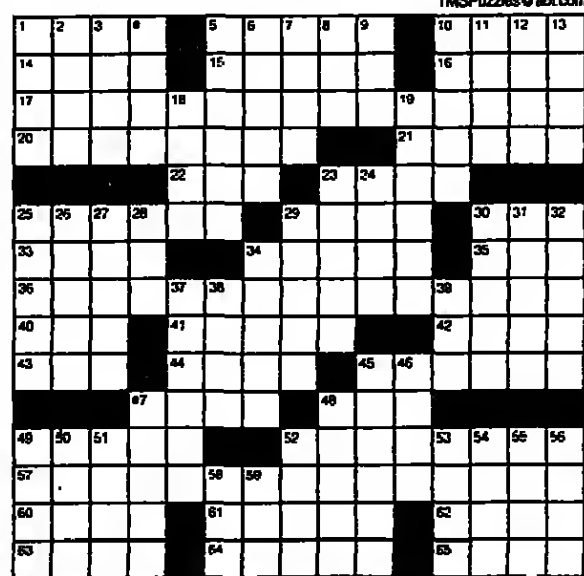
DAJANI Jewellers

Amra Forum Hotel Shops, Amman.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

- ACROSS
- "Candid Camera" man
 - Sarcastic taunts
 - Stack
 - Buckeye state
 - Eastern European lake
 - Slaty bird
 - Police officer's protection
 - Pay the piper
 - Jots
 - Ship back?
 - Card game for three
 - Completely surround
 - Operates
 - Cool down
 - Page
 - Old sacred Hindu scripture
 - Novelist Conroy
 - Glutton's requirement
 - Resident of suff.
 - Like sailor's stones
 - Poker stake
 - Hair fashions
 - Comic Rudner
 - Empty talk
 - Passing crazes
 - Abner
 - Soup dispenser
 - Warm, cheerful brightness
 - John Henry, e.g.
 - Ballet dancer Pavlova
 - Entrenched
 - Distress painfully
 - Coin flip
 - Arnold, the actor
 - Chopping tools

- DOWN
- Watch pockets
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 - River of Sudan
 - Usage charge
 - Deplained
 - Feed the computer
 - Actor Lahr
 - Prima donna's problem
 - Paulo, Brazil
 - Wheel

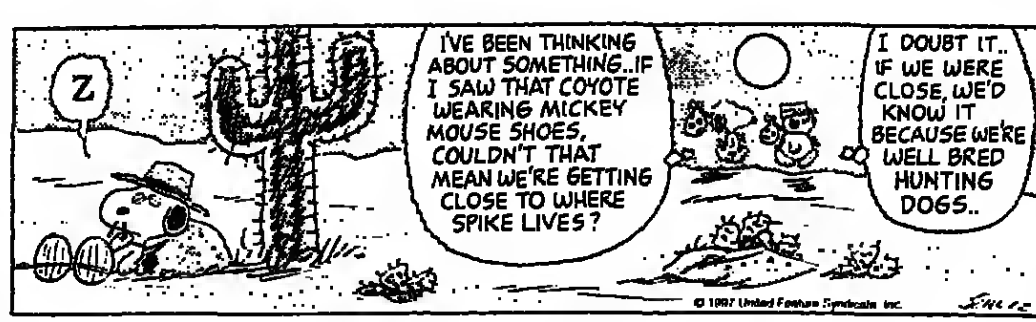


By Gerald R. Ferguson
Portland, OR

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- Guessed figs.
- Israel's airline
- Unqualified failure
- Full of lather
- Contract in wrinkles
- Spanish hero
- Groovy
- Neon and radon
- Instructors' grp.
- Oscar de la
- Colgate rival, once
- Water-storing
- Imaginary substance
- Electrical measure
- Shamir's nation
- Foxy
- Watcombe site
- Intentionally out of sight
- Lena or Ken
- Black plague carriers
- "Alicia" star
- Cult. senior's exam
- Chemical chart
- Lions' lairs
- Capital on the Baltic Sea
- Taj Mahal site
- Western st.
- Raw sugar
- Concludes
- Toothy dog.
- Furrow

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) If you're going to travel, be prepared for a lot of congestion out there. You might want to go by the route you used to take years ago. It could turn out to be a faster route to wherever you're going. And the time you save will make the trouble well worth it.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You don't like changes much. You like things to stay as they are. That will be a challenge today. A woman will be an unexpected ally. You two don't agree on much, but today you'll have a lot in common. If you ask for money to bring more certainty into your life, you just might get it. Protect what you've got in savings. That's rare commodity this time of year.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Travel should go very well today. It'll be even better if you're with your mate and you're going to visit somebody you love. A friend could drop over unexpectedly, however. If you know someone who's liable to do that, let him or her know you won't be around. Either that or get home early.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) There might be controversy at work. You're expecting things to go on way and they could turn out the opposite. Keep that in mind, but don't get distracted. There's something on your desk that needs to be handled. If you put it off much longer, you could incur a late fee, and you hate that.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A plethora of old jokes will show up today, some of them older than the hills. Milton Berle thought these jokes were stale. But the people at the party you're going to will be full of them. Maybe you could take a few seltzer bottles and some cream pies with you. Just kidding!

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is a marvellous time for cleaning up old messes and reestablishing old values. So dig out all your favourite memorabilia and decorate the house with it. You'll be using the Mercury retrograde condition to its utmost potential. And have a great time while you're at it.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're on a roll again. You're intelligent, charming and good-looking. You're finding it easier to learn new information, and you're also picking up old ideas you missed the first time around. The more you know about your past, the better you're able to chart your future.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Would it benefit the family to have a computer in the home? Or a cellular phone? You don't usually go in for that sort of thing. In this case, however, the price will be so good you'll be tempted to give it a try. Go ahead. Get something that will make your life easier. Your attitude will improve, too. This will be beneficial in more ways than you realise.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Listen to coaching from a parent or someone else of the older generation. This person has your best interests at heart. There's also good advice coming from a person your own age. You're interested in achieving the same goals, so why not work for them together?

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You hit the deck running first thing this morning. There's more to do than you could possibly get accomplished in one day. Actually, you set it up this way. You've been putting off lots of things all week. You've saying you could handle them on Saturday. Well, here is Saturday! Don't you just hate it?

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You're so popular, you might have trouble fitting all the invitations into your schedule. You may have to figure out ways to double these things up. Get people together at one place so you don't have to drive all over town. You could meet at a favourite restaurant. That's a nice way to have a party. Nobody has to clean up afterwards.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) The house is full of people, presents and wrapping paper. The old folks and the young ones are having all sorts of arguments, but everybody seems to be smiling. It's a marvellous time for working out old misunderstandings. None of them seem very important anymore.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



"My walking shoes cost \$99 — if I use them, they'll wear out too fast!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CHARP

FELCT

BOBJER

NEPOTT

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as it's posted by the above cartoon.

Answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: RANCH KINKY ASTRAY BURLAP

Answer: What the psychiatrist's patient called the hip hop music — "SHRINK" RAP

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VFL Bochum's Thomas Reis (R) and Sunday Oliseh (L) of Ajax Amsterdam fight for the ball during the second match of the third round of the UEFA soccer cup in Bochum. Ajax Amsterdam won the first match 4-2 (Reuters photo)

Ajax reach quarters as hundreds arrested

BOCHUM (AFP) — Dutch giants Ajax, 4-2 winners of the first-leg, reached the UEFA Cup quarter-finals here Thursday when they held German opponents Bochum to a 2-2 draw — but the match was marred by crowd trouble.

Before and during the match police were reported to have arrested about 700 fans — among them 100 Dutch supporters who threw beer mugs and damaged windows in two city centre cafes before the kick-off.

Bochum had only themselves to blame after squandering enough chances to have reached double figures.

Darius Wosz and the other home strikers created panic in the Ajax defence in the first half and only some poor finishing and excellent goal-keeping from Edwin van der Sar kept it goalless.

Ironically it was Ajax who opened the scoring through Georgian star Shota Arveladze in the

51st minute, but Bochum hit back to take the lead with goals from Norbert Hoffmann and Croatian midfielder Zoran Mamic.

Former West Ham striker Dani forced the draw for Ajax three minutes later.

Ajax, winners of the UEFA Cup in 1992, join Villa, Inter Milan, Spartak Moscow, Schalke, Auxerre, Lazio and Atletico Madrid in the quarter-finals.

Steelers send six starters to Pro Bowl

NEW YORK (AFP) — The Pittsburgh Steelers boast six starters and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who ended a string of 14 straight losing seasons this year, sent an National Football League-high seven players to the Pro Bowl.

Rosters for the all-star game, which is scheduled for February 1 in Honolulu, were announced Thursday. Running back Jerome Bettis, wide receiver Yancey Thigpen, centre Dermontti Dawson, defensive tackle Joel Steed, inside line-backer Levon Kirkland and safety Carnell Lake were the AFC starters selected from the Steelers.

The Kansas City Chiefs, who are tied with the Denver Broncos for the best record in the AFC at 11-3, also had six representatives.

However, the only starters named for the Chiefs were guard Will Shields and cornerback Dale Carter. The Kansas City reserves are wide receiver Andre Rison, fullback Kimble Anders, line-backer Derrick Thomas and cornerback James Hasty. Although the Buccaneers led the NFL with seven selections to the NFC team, the only starter in the group is middle line-backer Hardy Nickerson.

The other Buccaneers named were quarterback Trent Dilfer, running back Warrick Dunn, fullback Mike Alstott, center Tony Mayberry, defensive tackle Warren Sapp and outside line-backer Derrick Brooks.

Jordanian delegation leaves for 2nd Women's Islamic Games

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's 14-member delegation left for Tehran Friday to take part in the 2nd Islamic Games for Women which will be held in Iranian capital Dec. 13-21.

The exclusively female games bring together about 1000 athletes from 26 countries. The event officially opens Saturday afternoon with a ceremony in the Azadi Stadium west of Tehran, and is first such event organised by Iran since February 1993.

Jordan's delegation left for Tehran via Damascus Friday afternoon and will be competing in three events only.

According to Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) secretary-general Ismat Kurdi, nine athletes, three officials and a referee will take part in athletics, table tennis and badminton events adding that Jordan's first participation in the event was "a symbolic one."

The games are organised by Iran's Sports Solidarity Council for Women, headed by Faezeh Hasbemi, daughter of former Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

According to the officials, the games were originally to be hosted by Pakistan. But they returned to Iran after Islamabad pleaded financial difficulties.

"Ms. Faezeh Hashemi, a member of the Iranian Parliament, and vice-president of the Iranian Olympic Committee sent Jordan the invitation to take part. We feel it is important for the Kingdom to be part of such an event," Kurdi told the Jordan Times.

Events at the Games are athletics, chess, swimming, basketball, volleyball, tennis, shooting, handball, badminton, gymnastics, squash, equestrian and karate.

According to JOC officials, the athletes named by their respective federations are top class athletes in their sports. Amal Mutari won a bronze medal at July's Pan-Arab Games, while Alia Tufahha is a veteran player of the table tennis national team.

With all expenses to be covered by the hosts, three other federations had initially expressed interest to take part. Those include basketball, karate, and gymnastics.

The Games which will be held less than two weeks after the Iranian capital hosted the 1st Southwest Asian Games which were open to men's teams only.

Jordan took part in eight sports and won ten medals at the event.

The Kingdom's delegation will include

• Head of delegation: Sana' Bilbeisi

• Athletics:

Official: Ina'm Inabeh

Players: Rawan Jamil

Hana' Atiyeh

Amal Mutari

• Table tennis

Referee: Raghdha Zawaydeh

Players: Alia Tufahha

Lina Majdalawi

Hadeel Awwad

• Badminton

Official: Siham Abdallah

Coach: Randa Nabelsi

Players: Najwa Turk

Lina Rashdan

Karolin Shaker

2nd Arab Handball Champions Cup

Egypt's Ahli face UAE's Ahli in final

Jordan's Arabi finish 9th as Championship concludes today

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

Schedule of matches

AMMAN — Champions Egypt's Al Ahli will play United Arab Emirates' Al Ahli Saturday in the final match of the 2nd Arab Handball Champions Cup which concludes today after ten days of competition.

Egypt's Al Ahli reached the final after a 37-30 (20-12) win over Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli while UAE's Al Ahli knocked out Egypt's Al Olympi 20-19 (7-8) in the other semifinal which was a breath-taking match.

Meanwhile, Jordan's Al Arabi came in 9th place by default after Qatar's Qatar Club opted not to play because of a number of injured players on the team. The Qatari team thus came in

3rd and 4th places

Semifinal losers

Egypt's Olympi vs. Saudi Arabia's Ahli

Dec. 13 3 p.m.

Final match

Semifinal winners

Egypt's Al Ahli vs. UAE's Al Ahli

Dec. 13 5 p.m.

tenth place.

Kuwait's Al Qadissieh came in seventh place in the same fashion after Lebanon's Al Sadagah left back to Lebanon finishing in eighth place.

After losing to UAE's Al Ahli in the preliminary round, Jordan's Al Salt finished third in Group A and had to settle for playing for fifth and sixth places against Qatar's Al Rayyan in

Friday's late match.

Jordan's Al Arabi had finished last in Group B with only one point from a 35-35 tie with Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli.

The Jordan Handball Federation allocated cash rewards for Jordan's two teams in the tourney — Al Salt and Al Arabi: JD 2,000 if they finish third, JD1,000 for fourth place and JD500 for fifth place.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Hooligans appeal date set

STRASBOURG (AFP) — The three Liverpool hooligans jailed for four months for assault on October 22 will have their appeal against the sentence heard on December 22, their lawyer said on Friday. The three, who were arrested along with six others who were subsequently released, assaulted a passerby, prior to the UEFA Cup tie with Strasbourg, with an umbrella and then hit and kicked the man while he was on the ground leaving him with two black eyes. According to Gerard Dupuis, one of the supporters lawyers, they had drunk over 3.5 litres of beer and felt "threatened" by the man. The three defendants are 32-year-old James Kerr, manager of a sports shop, Matthew Godden, 21 a market vendor, and 32-year-old Paul Roach, a roofer.

N. Korea qualify to women's soccer finals

GUANGZHOU (AFP) — North Korea's women's footballers reached the finals of the Asian Winner's Cup here on Friday with a 1-0 victory over Japan — and grabbed a place in the 1999 World Cup finals. North Korea qualify for the Women's World Cup Soccer Championship to be held in the United States in 1999 as they are one of the top three qualifying teams. Japan's star striker Homare Sawa was marked out of the match and North Korean striker Kim Kun-Sil destroyed Japan's defence. North Korean coach Myong Tong Chon said he had not expected the victory as he thought the Japanese team was more skillful and experienced.

Mansell to take to the ice

PARIS (AFP) — Former world motor racing champion Nigel Mansell is to take to the ice when he competes in the 24 Hour Chamonix endurance race next month. "I have broken the bank to get him but it is worth it," said race organiser Frantz Hummel after confirming the Englishman had signed a contract. "I have been after Mansell for five years. He will add to the event and increase the interest of television," he added. However the 44-year-old Mansell is still without a car for the January 31 race. "The next stage is to find a team and a co-driver for Mansell. We have several ideas," said Hummel. The leading manufacturers taking part include Opel, BMW, Renault, Peugeot and Nissan.

Lloyd through for Champions semifinal

SYDNEY (AFP) — England's John Lloyd superior service pulled him through into the semi-finals of the inaugural Champions tennis tournament here on Friday. The 43-year-old Lloyd who is yet to win a tournament on the Champions tour, accounted for 1990 French Open champion Andre Gomez of Ecuador 6-4, 6-4. Gomez was ill-prepared for the tournament, boarding a plane for Sydney with less than 24 hours notice after the late withdrawal of Sweden's Mats Wilander. Lloyd, a beaten finalist in the 1977 Australian Open, will play South

African Joban Krik in Saturday's semi-finals

The 39-year-old Krik looms as the danger man for tournament top seed and eight-times grand slam singles champion Jimmy Connors, after blowing Argentina's Jose-Luis Clerc away in less than an hour. Krik, the Australian Open winner in 1981, and 1982, won 6-1, 6-3. In Saturday's other semi-final, Connors will play fellow American Tim Wilkison. Both had their first round matches on Thursday. The final is on Sunday.

2 injured in Asian Games construction accident

BANGKOK (AFP) — Two workers were seriously injured when the roof of a swimming pool complex collapsed on them as they helped build one of the key venues for the troubled 1998 Asian Games here. The workers were injured Thursday when a 60-by-120 metre (198-by-400 foot) metal frame being used to build the roof of an indoor pool caved in at Bangkok's Thammasat University. Three other workers received minor injuries in the accident at the site.

Liverpool eye Lazio coach

ROME (AFP) — Liverpool and Glasgow Rangers are sounding out Lazio's troubled Swedish coach Sven Goran Eriksson, the Italian press reported on Friday. The two British clubs are both preparing a substantial offer for the former Sampdoria and Benfica coach should he part company with Lazio, according to the Corriere dello Sport. Lazio have been faltering after a fine start to the Serie A season and are now struggling down in mid-table. However, they are through to the quarter-finals of both the UEFA Cup and the Italian Cup. Eriksson told the paper: "I refuse to even consider the idea of not seeing this through to the end. I can't go waking up every morning and wondering 'are they going to sack me today?'. If it happens, it happens. Sport is about winning and losing, and there are no halfway options. People either love you or they hate you."

Ronaldo ready for Sicily

PALERMO (AFP) — Ronaldo is set to be the star attraction here on December 30, when the Brazilian ace turns out for Inter Milan in their friendly against French club Auxerre. Ronaldo, currently with Brazil at the Confederation Cup in Saudi Arabia, will miss Inter's last two Serie A matches of the year. But Inter confirmed on Friday that the 21-year-old will play in Palermo. The match is part of the deal which brought Nigerian international defender Taribo West to Inter from Auxerre last summer. A sell-out crowd is expected at Palermo's "Favorita" stadium, as it was in February, when 35,000 packed the venue for the European Super Cup second leg and Juventus' 3-1 victory over Paris St Germain. Sicily, the home of this year's World Student Games, is also expected to host Italy's first pre-World Cup friendly at Catania in January, against a side yet to be determined.

PARIS (AFP) —

Barcelona, who retook the lead in the Spanish championship last weekend, take on Espanyol, the nearest defence in the league, in the Barcelona derby without star striker Rivaldo this weekend.

Rivaldo, the league's leading scorer with 10 goals, is on international duty with Brazil at the Confederations Cup, but the Catalan side have been boosted by the return of his compatriot Sonny Anderson and Spanish star Josep Guardiola.

Espanyol currently lie fourth, six points behind the leaders, and will certainly test the marksmanship of Anderson, who has hardly played since his move from Monaco because of injury. They have only conceded eight goals in 15 matches thus far this season.

Real Madrid, whose draw with Oviedo last weekend let Barcelona back into the lead, are on a high after their 4-0 win over Porto in the Champions League quarter-finals opening the way for their first European Cup triumph for the first time in 31 years.

Despite losing Brazilian defender Roberto Carlos for the Confederations Cup, and the injured duo of leading striker Predrag Mijatovic and Italian star Christian Panucci the 1996 champions should see off Merida, who have lost their last two matches.

Real's bitter city rivals Atletico Madrid, who reached the UEFA Cup quarter-finals on Tuesday, Jose Juninho to the Brazilian squad but should welcome back Italian striker Christian Vieri, who has been out for a month injured, against struggling Tenerife.

In France on Sunday third play second as Paris Saint

Germain, who will attempt to get over the disappointment of losing out on the European Cup quarter-finals on goal difference to Juventus, take on Metz.

Paris, who beat Besiktas 2-1 despite missing six regulars, will welcome back midfielder hardman Laurent Fournier, international defender Bruno Ngotty, who were both suspended for the European match, and another defender Jimmy Almerino.

However, French internationals Alain Roche and Vincent Guerin will be missing because of injury, although the club said that the latter had also been badly affected by the positive drugs test he returned earlier in the season.

Metz, whose 3-2 win at Parc des Princes two years ago was a rare success for them at PSG, will have to wait on star striker Robert Pires, who is back in training after a muscle injury.

Vladan Lukic and Bruno Rodriguez look likely to start up front for Metz if Pires decides not to risk it. Paris can go top if they beat Metz and championship leaders Monaco lose at home on Sunday to struggling Rennes — though as the Breton side have only scored one goal away from home since October 17 that appears to be a long shot.

Monaco, who finished top of their Champions League group to qualify for next Wednesday's quarter-final draw, will be without

Algerian playmaker Ali Benarbia, who is suspended, and defender Martin Djeto, who injured a thigh muscle on Wednesday.

Monaco coach Jean Tigana was furious at his team's negative tactics towards the end of their European tie with Bayer Leverkusen on Wednesday after they had tied the match at 2-2 to ensure both sides would qualify.

He will replace Benarbia with former Guingamp midfielder Stephane Carnot while Dia, who put on an assured performance when he came on for Djeto early in the first-half against Leverkusen, should start also.

Italy's league leaders Inter Milan face the hardship of life without Ronaldo this weekend when they meet title rivals AS Roma. Ronaldo misses the first of several matches over the next six months, as Brazil recall their goalscoring ace for the pre-World Cup friendlies.

The only consolation for

coach Gigi Simoni is that the call-up by Brazilian coach Mario Zagallo for the Confederation Cup also includes Roma's two key defenders, Cafu and Aldair.

Simoni has a number of options for replacing Ronaldo, who will also miss Sunday week's game in the Serie A before returning for the much-awaited showdown with champions Juventus on January 4.

Marco Branca will probably take over as centre-forward, but Simoni could either keep Youri Djorkaeff in his current role as strike partner, or move the Frenchman back to his previous job of an advanced midfielder.

Elsewhere, Juventus come back down to earth after the excitement of their European Champions League triumph over Manchester United with a dour league fixture at relegation strugglers Piacenza.

Trailing Inter by only two points in second place, they could go top of the table if Inter lose.

Parma, who bowed out of the Champions League in Istanbul and have slipped to fifth in the Serie A, need to end a poor run of form at bottom club Napoli.

Few teams would want to be in the shoes of Borussia Monchengladbach this Saturday when they travel to snowy Bavaria to try and inflict a fourth consecutive defeat on Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich.

Bayern have lost their last two Bundesliga games to rivals Bayer Leverkusen and Kaiserslautern and crashed 1-0 at home to Gothenburg in the Champions' League in midweek.

The Bundesliga's leading goalscorer Ulf Kirsten was suspended for nine weeks on Thursday for elbowing Schalke's Thomas Linke in the face last weekend.

He will only miss five Leverkusen games however because much of the ban falls during the winter holiday period. In addition to the ban the DFB added a 10,000 Mark fine.

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U.S. tries to pin down Israel over W. Bank troop pullback

TEL AVIV (AFP) — U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk arrived in Israel on Friday for talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders as the United States tried to pin Israel down over a critical handover of West Bank land to the Palestinians.

Mr. Indyk, who will meet Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Gaza on Saturday, is to lay the groundwork for a new round of talks between his boss, Madeleine Albright, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Arafat.

Mr. Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel, will head to Amman Sunday before returning in the evening for meetings with Mr. Netanyahu and his Foreign Minister David Levy, an embassy spokesman said.

Before Mr. Indyk's departure from Washington, a senior State Department official pressed Israel to "specify its position" on the West Bank troop withdrawal before Mr. Albright's talks with Mr. Netanyahu in Europe next

Thursday. But the official, speaking to Israeli journalists, said Ms. Albright did not expect Mr. Netanyahu to provide actual maps for the withdrawal, Israel Radio said.

The meeting will be the fourth in a month between Mr. Netanyahu and Ms. Albright, who has pressed Israel to go through with a "significant" withdrawal in order to break the nine-month deadlock in the peace process.

Mr. Netanyahu's government agreed in principle last month to go ahead with a troop withdrawal but even after a debate of its "kitchen" cabinet Thursday night it has been unable to agree on the extent of the redeployment.

Ms. Albright told Mr. Netanyahu in talks over the weekend the pullback should hand over at least 12 per cent of the West Bank to Palestinian rule, the Israeli press has said.

Israeli proposals have envisioned a withdrawal of only six to eight per cent, according to press reports. The Israeli cabinet is to

The Palestinians have not cited a specific number, but have demanded Israel go ahead with three stages of withdrawal as detailed in interim peace accords which they say should give them 90 per cent of the West Bank.

Mr. Levy, considered a moderate in Mr. Netanyahu's camp, has insisted in the internal government debate that a precise plan be ready so that the Israeli premier does not meet Ms. Albright empty handed on Thursday.

In a sign of the continuing chill between Israel and Washington, the State Department official also accused Mr. Netanyahu's office of being behind a media campaign to discredit Mr. Indyk ahead of his mission to Israel.

The official said Mr. Netanyahu's office was behind advertisements run in the American press which branded Mr. Indyk as "pro-Arab" and were signed by an unknown group. "The Committee to Protect Israel,"

debate plans for the West Bank handover in its weekly session on Sunday.

Two members of the kitchen cabinet, Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, took a helicopter tour over the West Bank Friday to view areas that might be handed over in the withdrawal (See separate story).

The extreme right and Jewish settlers, meanwhile, stepped up their rhetoric, vowing they would oppose any handover of additional lands to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Rabbis from West Bank settlements called for a demonstration outside the prime minister's office to coincide with Sunday's cabinet meeting.

The PNA currently has total control only over the main towns of the West Bank, around three per cent of the area. They have civilian control in another 27 per cent of the territory, where the Israeli army has ultimate security power.

Israeli ministers fly over West Bank to look at territories prior to debate

TEL AVIV (AP) — Ahead of a crucial cabinet debate on Israel's future borders, two key ministers who have been sketching maps flew over the West Bank on Friday to determine how much land Israel can safely hand over to the Palestinians.

Army planners reportedly propose that Israel withdraw from 20 per cent of the West Bank in the next troop redeployment, a move that would leave the Palestinians with limited control over nearly half the territory.

The pullback would not give Palestinians territorial continuity but would make travel to Israel difficult for the residents of several Jewish settlements, the Yediot Ahronot newspaper said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under pressure to present a detailed proposal for a West Bank troop pullback when he meets with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Paris next week.

U.S. envoy Martin Indyk, a former ambassador to Israel, was to come to the Mideast this weekend and hold talks with Mr. Netanyahu, as well as regional leaders, apparently to ensure a quick decision on a troop withdrawal.

Media reports have said that the Americans expect Israel to hand over at least 12 per cent of the West Bank in the next pullback, one of three proposals by mid-1998.

On Sunday, the Israeli cabinet is to begin discussing different maps showing where the final border between Israel and the Palestinian entity could run. Mr. Netanyahu has said he wanted to have a better idea of final borders before deciding on the scope of a limited troop pullback.

Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, a cabinet hawk, reportedly opposes the 20 per cent pullback put forth by the army planners, pushing for a more limited withdrawal. The Palestinians currently

full or partial control 27 per cent of the West Bank. Under the army proposal, 10 per cent more would come under partial and 10 per cent under full Palestinian control. The Palestinians have said they expect to control at least 90 per cent of the land after the third pullback.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat rejected an initial plan floated by Israeli officials that proposed a transfer of 6 per cent to 8 per cent of the West Bank in the upcoming redeployment.

Mr. Sharon and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai took a flight over the West Bank on Friday to determine Israel's security needs, said Mr. Sharon's spokesman Raanan Gissin. In a permanent peace agreement, Mr. Sharon wants Israel to annex broad swaths along the eastern and western edges of the West Bank, and keep control over all of the Jewish settlements.

EU leaders seek to heal rift with Turkey

LUXEMBOURG (AFP) — European leaders on Friday kept up desperate efforts to heal a rift with Turkey which is threatening to overshadow a two-day EU summit on expanding the bloc eastward.

However, both sides maintained a tough stance, with Turkey saying EU conditions were unacceptable and delegates from other countries insisting Turkey must make major steps forwards, notably regarding its relations with Greece and the Cyprus question, before being eligible for membership.

Britain said Friday it was still hopeful Turkey would agree to take part in a European Conference due to be launched next spring, despite indications from Ankara that it plans to snub the new forum.

"We want to see a good and a developing relationship with Turkey," a Foreign Office spokesman said at a summit of EU leaders that has been overshadowed by the row with the Turks over their exclusion from the next round of EU enlargement.

The summit is expected to issue a declaration that Turkey is eligible for eventual EU membership and set a launching date of March 12 for the new conference. Turkey has rejected this offer, claiming it amounts to giving it third-class status compared to other candidates for membership.

"We are accepting conditions for opening negotiations, but we cannot accept these conditions to be candidates," spokesman for the Turkish delegation Haluk Ilıcak said.

Britain, which will be responsible for smoothing over the row from January, when it takes over the EU Presidency from Luxembourg, was committed to getting the conference up and running with Turkey fully engaged, the spokesman said.



WELCOME HOME: Jamila Ali, the mother of the second Jordanian released from Iran, kisses her son Khalid Awad Friday. Mr. Awad had been held in detention since 1986 in the Iranian prisons after he had volunteered to fight by the side of the Iraqi forces in the Iraq-Iran war. Mr. Awad returned on Friday with Crown Prince Hassan, who headed the Jordanian delegation for the Islamic summit in Tehran (See story on page 1) (photo by Yousef Allan)

Delegates at Islamic summit condemn terrorism, Israel

TEHRAN (AP) — The world's Muslim nations condemned terrorism in the name of Islam and demanded that Israel stop building settlements in occupied Arab land and Jerusalem in a joint declaration Thursday that ended their three-day summit.

The statement followed a divisive debate by delegates of the 55-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference who differed widely on everything from support for the faltering Middle East process to relations with the United States and the West.

In a sign of the disagreements, the peace process was not specifically mentioned. But the declaration sharply criticised Israel for what it called "state terrorism" and supported the creation of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

In the spirit of the opening speech by Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, the declaration called for "interaction, dialogue and understanding among cultures and religions." It also condemned terrorism and urged states to deny asylum to terrorists.

"The killing of innocent people is forbidden in Islam," said the five-page statement, a copy of which was obtained by the Associated Press. It was to be read at the summit's closing session.

The summit, which drew 28 heads of state, prime ministers and crown princes, served as a forum for Iran to forge ties with countries long wary of its 1979 Islamic revolution.

Much of the action at the

conference centre at the foot of the snow-dusted Alborz Mountains occurred on the sidelines, where Iranian leaders met with Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Kuwait's emir and other Arab leaders, many of whom were making their first trip to Iran.

Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah was the only leader to meet twice with President Khatami, and officials from both Egypt and Saudi Arabia, two key U.S. allies, promised to take steps to improve ties.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa said Thursday that the meetings brought about a measure of reconciliation, "some understanding and some movement in the right direction."

Delegates differed, though, on the Middle East peace process. Few countries expressed unconditional support. They instead blamed Israel for what they saw as its attempt to undermine agreements, but still gave their backing to efforts to break the impasse.

Iran, however, has said nothing good will come of the peace process, and Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, called it "unjust, arrogant, contemptuous and finally, illogical." The Iranian delegation, however, tempered its rhetoric during the later debate, mindful of not offending its Arab guests.

Arab officials hoped, too, that the summit would pressure Turkey to reconsider two military agreements it signed with Israel in 1996, cooperation that was roundly

denounced during the debate. Turkey is the only Muslim nation to have concluded such agreements.

Turkey's president, Suleiman Demirel, left Wednesday night, apparently to avoid criticism on the summit's final day. He, however, insisted that his work was done.

While not mentioning Turkey by name, the declaration urged it to reconsider its military cooperation because of "the danger it poses to the security of Islamic countries."

The declaration made a veiled criticism of Afghanistan's Taliban militia, which was conspicuously absent at the summit.

Although Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates recognise the Taliban as Afghanistan's government, Iran has strongly opposed it, describing as medieval the militia's interpretation of Islam that bars girls from schools and women from work.

The declaration called for "full respect for the dignity and the rights of Muslim women and enhancement of their role in all aspects of social life in accordance with Islamic principles."

The declaration also criticised U.S. attempts to penalise countries doing business with Iran and Libya.

The conference's closing session was delayed by a dispute over the venue of the next summit in 2000. Delegates said Syria had hoped to host the meeting, but Qatar was chosen in the end.

Arafat condemns Israeli attempt to prevent Palestinian census

TEHRAN (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat denounced as an "annoyance" Thursday a new Israeli law barring a Palestinian census in Arab east Jerusalem as West Bank officials said their first-ever census was going "as planned."

President Arafat, who was in Tehran for the eighth Organisation of the Islamic Conference summit, said, "We expected such a measure to annoy the Palestinians."

The Israeli parliament in an emergency session Wednesday night passed a law banning the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) from conducting the headcount in Arab east Jerusalem as an infringement to "Israeli sovereignty" over the sector, occupied and illegally annexed by Israel in 1967.

The head of the Palestinian

Statistics Bureau, Hassan Abu Libda, said census-takers "have faced a number of problems in areas lying under Israeli control, including east Jerusalem."

"But on its first day the census process went forward as planned in all Palestinian areas and we were able to complete six per cent of the total work," he said. The census-taking continues until Dec. 24.

Mr. Abu Libda said census officials held meetings after the vote "to take all steps necessary to ensure the implementation of the census in all areas, including Jerusalem."

Palestinian International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath, who was with President Arafat in Tehran, said the new Israeli law was part of "Israel's aggressive policy to try to Judaize Jerusalem and deprive us of

our rights in the city."

In Cairo, Arab League spokesman Talaat Hammed told reporters: "This decision is illegal and null and void because it was made by an authority which occupies east Jerusalem."

The French government also criticised the new law. "We believe that a law voted on in haste by the Knesset [Israel's parliament] to ban this operation is a new unilateral gesture... the [Israeli] annexation of east Jerusalem not having been recognised by the international community," French Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Anne Gazeau-Secret said.

U.S. State Department deputy spokesman James Foley urged the Palestinians and Israel to refrain from provocations. The prime minister's office to her will" with her extravagant love of gifts, violent temper and paranoid jealousy, said Israel's largest-circulation tabloid newspaper Yediot Aharonot.

In a much-publicised supplement, the paper splashed juicy details across eight pages of the first lady's reported exploits, warning of her detrimental effect on her husband's administration.

The blow may be below the belt, but it has struck home, sparking widespread comment in the Israeli press, and leading Mr. Netanyahu to slam the "evil and malicious" campaign against his wife.

"Bibi" Netanyahu has real "woman troubles," an editorial

wrote in the daily Haaretz, drawing a parallel between difficulties with Sarah and Mr. Netanyahu's strained relations with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

"On the home front Bibi faces a female Nero who threatens to humiliate him at any time. On the international front, he faces a woman who, despite her soft maternal exterior, hides a truncheon behind her back," the editorial jabbed.

Even before Yediot hit the stands, Mr. Netanyahu was fuming, accusing the media of "a campaign of shameful defamation which is reaching its nadir with this article."

But he and Sarah have made

no moves to file a legal complaint against the paper.

The blonde, 39-year-old Sarah was a popular draw on the campaign stump which brought Bibi to office in 1996, but in the 18 months since, the Israeli media has revelled in throwing light on her "scandals."

The Yediot expose paints Sarah as unstable, dictatorial and insanely jealous, revealing a harrange of incidents citing members of her staff and the prime minister's office.

Among the juicier tidbits, the first lady asked a shocked assistant to taste a bottle of wine she had received as a gift to "test if it was poisoned" and she hurled shoes at a domestic servant for polishing

them badly.

She flew into a jealous rage which "shook the studio" after torch singer Ofra Haza touched her husband's shoulder during a live television broadcast.

When her husband "tried to calm her down, she threatened to lodge a complaint with the police against him for heating her," the paper said.

She demanded an office near her husband's with two secretaries on government salaries, although she rarely appears in the office, and she regularly receives gifts, some potentially illegal.

When she discovered that her press adviser Rami Sadan was not included on a trip by the first couple abroad, she

demanding that an aide to Mr. Netanyahu give up his seat on the plane.

Supporters of the first couple say Sarah is a victim of press attacks, an easy target for opponents of her increasingly unpopular husband.

Her critics insist she is fair game, pointing to the fact that Bibi brought her into public light during his election campaign and revealed on television he had committed adultery.

But even the dishes of dirt had some sympathy for the besieged first lady. "My heart is with Sarah, not because what is written is wrong, but sadly, because it is mostly true," wrote the Haaretz editorialist.

Prince William takes day off school for Xmas party

LONDON (AFP) — Prince William took a day off school to attend a Christmas party and learn more about the job he hopes to get when he grows up — being king. He was allowed, exceptionally, to miss a day at elite Eton school near London to help his grandmother, Queen Elizabeth, host the party for staff at Buckingham Palace.

According to the Sun daily, the invitation to the Buckingham Palace event was a sign that the queen was grooming him for his future role. William spent weekends with her at Windsor Castle, near London, and is being slowly introduced to every aspect of royal life.

Burglar caught by his ear-prints

LONDON (AFP) — A suspected burglar was caught by police after he left ear-prints behind at break-ins. London magistrates' court heard Thursday, several press reports said. On Friday, Calvin Sewell, 27, was arrested after allegedly put his ear against victims' front doors and windows to make sure they were not at home. Police matched a sample of ear-prints with those of a suspected thief, who has been charged with five burglaries in south London.

Italian royal family one step closer to home

ROME (AFP) — Italy's exiled royal family was one step closer to home Thursday after the lower house of parliament took its first step to amend the constitution that banished the 50 years ago. In a secret vote, deputies adopted a move to modify the 1946 constitution that banned monarchs of the House of Savoy and their descendants from returning to Italy. However it is only a first reading. The move must also be approved by the upper house, the Senate, before returning to the Chamber of Deputies. The House of Savoy ruled Italy from 1861 until 1946 when a referendum claimed a republic.

Plane lands itself in U.S. after pilot blacks out

KANSAS CITY (R) — A Kansas doctor blacked out while flying his plane, and was jarred awake 48 hours later when his aircraft struck a tree after running out of gas and landing itself in a field. Rob Frayer, 47, was apparently overwhelmed by carbon monoxide from a leaking engine system after flying 161 km from Kansas to Missouri. "In a situation like that, you're supposed to crash and burn," Frayer told Reuters. "There is no doubt in my mind it was a miracle. The good Lord landed the plane."

Hong Kong chief executive mindful of feng shui

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong chief executive Tung Chee-hwa has called in a feng shui expert, or geomancer, to advise him on the timing of a move to new offices, according to reports here. His staff are to move to the new offices Sunday, but Tung will wait until the more auspicious date of Dec. 16, the Oriental Daily News said. Tung has a reputation for being mindful of feng shui, the Chinese practice of maintaining harmony between the elements.

He refused to move into the Government House, official residence of successive British governors, as it had feng shui.

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